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WHEN LOVE IS KING

MARGARET DOYLE JACKSON

KD 12708

Against his will Todhunter's voice shook—and the dream was over
Frontispiece. Page 150

When Love is King

BY

MARGARET DOYLE JACKSON

AUTHOR OF
"A DAUGHTER OF THE PIT," "THE HORSE-LEECH'S DAUGHTERS," ETC.

"His Tribe were God Almighty's Gentlemen."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CH. GRUNWALD

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ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL

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CHAPTER II.

TODHUNTER.

Todhunter had dropped upon the secluded world of Staley Crags with the suddenness and seeming lack of connection with other things of a lost meteorite. Lost he was, in fact; and Mr. Morrison, returning home over the moors very late one night with his sweetheart Miss Annette Lyttle and his friend her brother, had found the child.

Todhunter's mother was with him to be sure, but she was dead—from starvation apparently. She wore no ring, wherefore public opinion had set her down forthwith as an unfortunate. It seemed that she had felt her end coming, for she had tied around the child's neck a paper with his name and age and her last anxious prayer for him written thereon, "Todhunter Payson, aged eleven months. God raise up protectors for thee, my little son."

The boy promised to have need of them, for he was a most curious child. A great forehead, crown-

ing an old mannish face, and set below with a pair of small, grave, but most observing gray eyes, gave him a precocious air of having long since puzzled out for himself many things in heaven and earth which do not commonly trouble children of his tender years. If he had any knowledge of occult matters, however, he kept them sedately to himself; for in the midst of his ugliness was set a very sweet child-mouth, which might have betokened a sensitive and retiring disposition to any one sufficiently interested to observe it.

Todhunter himself was no more curious than the place in which he was found, on the moorlands of Cornwall, a remote sea-girt country, haunted by the memories of races long gone. The breeze hushing across the heather brought whispers of them, and of the strange dark secrets of their lives. It was the land of an ancient people—so old that they had lived their day and vanished into silence before English history began. Only the stones of their villages and simple fortresses in the hills remained to tell to moderns the story of their life. Their feet, stilled now in milleniums of rest, had first traced out the roads across the heath; these leading usually

from the granite huts of the common folk to the abode of their great one who was protector and oppressor in one. The long low barrows, rising solemnly here and there from the plain, chronicled something of their death. Here the slain warriors were gathered together after ancient battles, or the bodies of those who had died in peace were brought one by one from the villages and laid in a common grave. Savage decency covered them with a *karn* of stones and earth; and by and by the kind old moor crept over them—her own first born children. Grass grew between the stones. Heather with its purple bells, and the triumphant yellow gorse waved over the crest, and lent their familiar rustle to the wind's lullaby. And, though the last of the race had long since crept to sleep beneath the barrows, and men of a later age came sometimes to muse above them and piece together the meagre record of their lives, the moor itself was still the same as it had been in their day, and the ears of the dead could detect no new note in the rune which the breeze sang. Except perhaps that the Atlantic's voice was something louder than of old; for it was a changing coast, and

the waves now covered much of the land that had once been the domain of those ancient men.

From this place Mr. Morrison—a young clergyman of the English Church—and Miss Lyttle whom he soon afterwards married, had carried the strange child home and placed him in charge of an old woman named Mrs. Bell.

There he grew up obscurely and unnoticed until he was six. Very few persons knew his full name, because on the second day after his arrival Mrs. Bell had christened him Tod, observing that it was a much better name for a baby and easier to say. Consequently Tod he was.

Mr. Morrison's chief idea in placing him with the old lady had been that as she had recently lost a little grandchild of her own she would certainly be kind to Tod.

On the whole she was. She nursed him through his small ailments, kept his face clean and his hair combed; also when she was in good humor, gave him some kisses and petting, moved to it by the old-mannish and gravely decorous air of curiosity which was Tod's demeanor to his surroundings and the world.

If on other occasions she was less kind she ex-

cused herself on the plea that it was hard to have such a little monster thrust into the place of her dear pretty Tommy. And Tod would sit in his corner or stray off alone through the garden, on his face an expression which said that he, too, was afraid it must have been a very hard thing for Mrs. Bell.

For Tod at six years was no handsomer than he had been at eleven months. If the mother whom he no longer remembered had been there she might have noted, perhaps, about the eyes and mouth of her baby a something which had escaped her before. Or it might have been stealthily developed during the five years since she went. Such a something one sometimes sees in the brown eyes of a dog that is seeking among strangers for a familiar face, or one that will appeal to instinct as a possible friend. It used to creep into Tod's small eyes when Mrs. Bell wept for her darling Tommy, who was so good and pink and pretty, and so entirely different from Tod.

Tod's education was not neglected. At six he had acquired a good deal of unsuspected but definite knowledge about himself and life. His patron who had lately taken him in hand had taught him a great many things usually beyond his years. Teaching

him was a marvelously easy matter, for he seemed to assimilate knowledge as unconsciously and easily as he breathed.

Tod knew there was a God and a Devil. God was good; and Tod associated Him vaguely with Mr. Morrison, partly because the latter was kinder to the little soul than any one else, and partly too perhaps because it was Mr. Morrison who talked to him of God. For the rest, Tod had found out for himself that there was a subtle difference between himself and the other boys of the village.

He pondered deeply over this, and came at last to the conclusion that it was because he was not respectable. To be truly respectable a boy must have a father and mother whom everybody knows, and a house of his own to live in. Whereas Tod had none of these. Tod's mother had been found dead on the moor—starved to death, people said—and no one knew anything about his father. Tod himself belonged to nobody in particular. Wherefore Tod could not be respectable.

In those early days, therefore, until he learned better, he was inclined to be very shy and timid. People who thought anything about him said he was

elfish. Unnoticed he would wander off up the hillside to the wide bright moor, where Mr. Morrison was apt to find him hunting solitary for beetles and bugs and white winged butterflies.

Tod's own experience, perhaps, made him careful of the pain of others. He never killed the creatures he caught. One sunny day Mr. Morrison, returning on foot from some outlying cottages, discerned near the cliff edge a small figure on its haunches, so deeply engrossed in its cap that his own approach was unnoticed. Mr. Morrison paused a few feet away and saw in the cap a couple of earwigs, whose persistent efforts to get out Tod was carefully frustrating with a sprig of heather. To all else he was just then blind and deaf.

"Hello, Tod," said his patron, "you here? Why aren't you down playing with the other boys?"

Tod dropped his cap with a start, and the earwigs made good their escape. A look of quaint delight was on his queer features as he got to his feet. Tod liked Mr. Morrison.

"I was getting earwigs, sir," said he, diffidently.

"Earwigs? Let me see."

But the cap was empty; and Tod, stooping down,

searched with a practised eye among the roots of the grass, while his friend looked on amused.

"Here they are," said the boy gravely, as he found them and put them back. "They're both together. If they hadn't kept so close they might have got away."

"What do you want of them Tod? Wouldn't it be better if you did let them get away?" asked the unsophisticated gentleman.

"No," said Tod. "I want them for the bug-house."

"The *what?*"

"Bug-house. I'm making one. It's got upstairs and downstairs. You put the beetles and butterflies in the upstairs; but if you've got a frog you'll have to put him downstairs, 'cos he'd eat them all."

"I see. And who told you how to make the bug-house, Tod?"

"Nobody. It isn't finished yet," admitted Tod, modestly.

"I never saw a bug-house like that. Would you mind letting me see yours? I might be able to help you," suggested his friend.

The architect looked bashfully out to sea, then

from under his great eyebrows sent a rapid upward glance to discover whether Mr. Morrison were laughing at him. But the man's eyes met his in perfect faith.

"It's in the back garden," said Tod, suddenly, and with a cautious look into the cap to make sure that the earwigs were safe, set off with energy in the unwonted delight of having a companion.

"But Tod"—the strong breeze whistled across their faces as they journeyed together along the brow of the cliff, beneath which the sea boomed and thundered—"why do you come off up here by yourself? Don't you like to be with the other boys?"

"Yes." This was a very sore point in Tod's brain, but of course Mr. Morrison could not know that. "They don't like me," said he, slowly.

"Why, Tod boy, whatever makes you think that?"

"I'm somehow different. I think it must be 'cos I'm not respectable," explained the waif, with a sad little note in his voice.

And then to his patron's enlightened ears was related Tod's private and particular conception of respectability. Also, with logic more sorrowful than tears, that it must be on account of Tod's own great

deficiencies that the other boys did not like him.

"Tod, said the man, pitifully, "I'll tell you a secret. I haven't any mother or father, either."

Tod stood stock still.

"Haven't you?" he whispered.

Then the sensitive mouth grew suddenly, gravely tender; "I've often wondered what made you like me, sir, when nobody else did. And that must be it, of course"

Mr. Morrison was nonplussed, but recovered quickly.

"One reason, Tod. But am I respectable?"

"Of course."

"You've never heard any one say I was not?"

Tod shook his head. The brain behind the big overhanging forehead was busy.

"You see, Tod," said his friend, "that idea of yours was all a mistake. No one thinks the worse of little boys because they have no fathers or mothers. Try to make friends with the other boys; you will learn to like each other by and by. And do not think any more about that fancy of yours. Until you do something wrong yourself you are as respectable as anyone."

"Tod, I'll tell you a secret. I haven't any mother or father, either"
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"Yes," said Tod, "I see. It must be something else then."

And he took the lesson well to heart.

In Mrs. Bell's back garden he showed Mr. Morrison the bug-house, built of grass and sticks and scraps of wire netting, and looking as great an oddity in its way as Tod himself. The gentleman personally helped to repair one of the glass sides of the upstairs, which would insist on falling down. Within, on an earth and grass strewn floor, they put the protesting earwigs; and Mr. Morrison promised to look up a piece of very fine wire netting for the roof, which was at present of glass and did not admit sufficient air. Downstairs, another bed of grass sods and a pan of water awaited the cannibal frog, who was not to be trusted with neighbors.

When Mr. Morrison went home he told his wife of the queer waif's doings, and of the problem that was troubling him. Annette cried while she laughed. Every day after that when Tod's lesson hour with his patron was over she took him into the garden where the fat yellow gooseberries grew. He used to eat them until his teeth were set on edge. Something in the gooseberries, or perhaps only in

what she said to him, made life sweeter to Tod, and he learned to abandon many of his ideas as untenable.

CHAPTER II.

BUNDLE.

One might wander for days upon the sunny moorland heights and the still higher hills without coming upon the Cornish village of Staley Crags. Wild and sea-washed and picturesque, it lay in a broad moor valley whose bottom grew deeper, and whose slopes more broken and interspersed with jagged cliffs as it ran westward into the Atlantic.

The valley's sides were seamed with crooked paths, winding hither and thither among the houses; and along the bottom ran a single good road, commencing far inland where the gorge was a mere shallow dip in the country. There was one street besides, paved with sharp granite cobbles. Branching away from the road it climbed the wild hillside by itself until it grew tired, when it left off suddenly, having arrived at nowhere in particular. One small shop, and houses a dozen or two composed it. But houses in Staley Crags stood where they pleased,

without any foolish idea of confining themselves to a street simply because it was a street.

And the street was really not necessary. The zigzagging paths, turning out of their way for a boulder or an oak tree, led by shade and sunshine up and down, past irregular fields of deep warm meadow grass and wheat, where the red poppies flaunted in the sun; by gaps and hollows here and there, where if tired, one paused to rest upon a weather browned stile fashioned in a former century, or upon a gnarled tree stump, rotting peacefully in the shade of its own wide spreading progeny. Timber is scarce in Cornwall, and the trees of the valley came of a squat sturdy race. Fierce storms swept the bare high moor, and raged along that coast even in summer; and tree wisdom handed down from many forefathers had said that the tree whose head grew low grew longest.

Down near the sea there lay in the green hillside a deep black hole. People called it Great Trevanny, and its dark mouth cast a spell of awful mystery over Tod in those days. He used to watch the men and boys of the valley going up and down in it every morning and night. Mr. Morrison had said it was

a great tin mine, and that the Cornishmen and their sons went down into it to earn their living; but Tod's ideas concerning it were for a long time rather foggy.

High above all these things of the valley stretched the moors—broad and free, bathed in winds, mists, or vivid glorious sunshine. Here was no sound but the call of the wild birds, the whirr of their wings as they rose startled from under one's very feet; the musical booming of the breeze, pungent with the scent of tansy and sea salt; and underneath all, the deep sonorous diapason of the Atlantic, stretching blue, sunlit, mighty, to the other side of the world.

These were the things Tod loved.

He loved all things that were beautiful, poor ugly little manikin that he was. And he never, in those days at least, perceived the irony of it.

Especially he loved the flaming poppies, that with cool dark hearts nodded at him from the yellowing wheat; and often in his solitary questing up the hillside he turned aside to gather them, his ungainly figure and shock head making a dark spot upon the brilliant landscape. Lying on his back among the purple heather bells of the moorland, peeping

through his scarlet silken leaved poppies at the sun, Tod would listen to the talk of the busy moor folk about him and weave himself a fairy tale. Tod of the moor was a Prince—crowned King of the joyous butterflies, the gossiping moor-pipits and blackbirds, the motherly earwigs and the feverish ants who were always in such a hurry and yet never seemed to do anything of much importance.

Farther along the cliff one came to the "Puffing Hole." There at the risk of one's neck and limbs one might crawl on one's stomach to peer down the jagged Hole and hear, somewhere below, the Atlantic booming among subterranean caves. People said that the land about the Puffing Hole would one day slide bodily into the sea, because the waves were gradually eating it away from beneath. In winter time, when furious storms beat across the moor and the sea, the Puffing Hole gave forth great clouds of vapory spray—like a whale that had come ashore by mistake—and, if one went near enough then, one might hear, under the shrieking of the wind, the roaring and groaning of the imprisoned waters within, which were trying in vain to get out.

Tod was growing taller. He was seven now, and

less shy; and knew a constant hankering for the society of "the other fellows." Already his loose hung limbs were knitting into the promise of coming strength; but he was so clumsy that he broke all old Mrs. Bell's dishes, and she made his life wearisome. One day he started out in earnest to the making of friends and connections for himself.

The boys of Staley Crags were suffering just then from a violent craze for bull's eye lanterns. Lately there had come into town, at the cart end of a financiering genius of a peddler, a number of those rare articles—at sevenpence apiece, and worth in reality just about half that. No matter. There are some things on earth not to be measured by mere pence, and the boys approved those lanterns. From big Pike, pattern and bully of all the rest, down to the popular, dirty fisted young democrat, Luke Lyttle, son of that Mr. Lyttle who had assisted at the finding of Tod, they were resolved to own a lantern or die.

Feeling the pinch of poverty, Tod went to Mrs. Bell and requested sevenpence. It was a great sum. The old lady answered that he might have it by working; not otherwise.

"Yes ma'am; I'll work. What'll I do?" said grave Tod.

Mrs. Bell laughed at such simplicity; Tod's strong young back and willing temper were very useful to her on occasion. It was impossible to earn sevenpence in five minutes; but if he would give up his play hours and his nonsensical roaming up to the moor and the like, where he never could be had when wanted, she would pay him a penny a day; with which he might buy his foolish fancy if he wished.

As Jacob worked for Rachel so Tod worked for his lantern. Seven years could be no longer than those seven days were. And when, with wealth jingling in his pockets, and a boy's vanity in himself, he went to buy, there came a wholly unlooked for hitch.

He heard a loud commotion on the road behind him. Pike was coming down with the crowd; and behind him, unwilling, jostled under many feet, came Bundle—ugly, stray and friendless as Tod himself. Bundle was at the end of a rope, and fear was in his great brown eyes. Bundle knew he was not highly regarded in Staley Crags, where he existed by his wits and his four swift shaggy feet, and was

generally disreputable. And Bundle had stolen Pike's dinner!

The procession went past the shop, and Tod, fascinated, fell in behind. Pike, pompous and magisterial, would not declare his intentions; but beneath his arm the rope end was coiled securely around a great flat stone, and he was leading the dog down to the sea.

Tod, only one of the small fry, but thrilled by the vague impending tragedy, looked down and saw Bundle's eyes. Bundle was searching among them all for a friend, and at the sight Tod's heart swelled with such boldness that he almost forgot he was shy. He edged his way through the crowd to Pike's high shoulder and plucked at his sleeve.

"Pike—I say—maybe he won't do it again."

"He *won't!*" Pike said very sternly, and pressed on without stopping.

But Tod kept his place. Pike looked angry, but Tod would have dared being killed just then for poor Bundle.

"But I say Pike, please give him another chance. Maybe he was hungry." Pike stopped and winked at the crowd. "Maybe he wor. That don't excuse

him for not learning better manners. But p'raps you know more how it feels than the rest of us. Tell us, Tod."

This was meant as a joke, because everyone knew Tod's mother had been starved to death. Some of the other boys snickered. Tod's bronzed face grew slowly red; but he did not fall back as he would have done a year ago. In the lull Bundle crept unobserved to him and licked his hand imploringly.

"Pike, will you sell him?"

"Well—how much?" hesitated Pike; to the last of his life Pike would do much for money. "Sevenpence," said Tod, with unskilled directness.

"Not under a shilling."

"I've only got sevenpence."

"Not under a shilling," repeated Pike, turning away. The boys set forward again, but Bundle held back by main strength.

"Pike"—guileful Tod drew out the seven big pennies and held them under Pike's eyes—"look here, you'd better sell him; you won't get nothin' if you drown him you know." Pike hesitated a moment at that and then said.

"Well, all right; pay your money over. It'd be

a shame to spoil such a pair as you'll make, Tod."

Pike held out his hand, hollowed like a big cup, and Tod poured the seven precious pennies into it. His intentions were so honest that he hardly realized what was happening when Pike, like the big bully he was, slipped the coins into his pocket with a wink and jerked Bundle, desperately braced with all four feet, downward as before. The boys followed; some of them laughing, some very quiet. They were just ordinary boys, and the fact that a feared and respected leader had done this thing went far toward making it right. But Tod, awaking from the surprise, realized what was being done.

"Give him me," he shouted, crushing his way through to Pike. He was so angry that he forgot to be afraid, and he felt very strong. He planted himself before Pike, panting with indignation. "Give him me." But Pike only laughed and pushed him to one side; he could do it easily because he was so much larger. "Sevenpence bain't enough to pay for a dog. He's eat my dinner, lad, and that makes him more valuable."

But Tod's only answer was to launch himself, with both fists clenched, right on that part of the big boy's

anatomy which was already suffering from Bundle's dishonesty. For a few seconds he knew nothing of the world or the boys; he knew nothing except that he wanted to kill Pike—to kill him for his dishonesty as Bundle was going to be killed,—and every ounce of strength he had was behind the blows that his clumsy young fists were raining on the big body of the butcher's son. He did not know that the queer taste in his mouth was his own blood, or that Pike had knocked one of his teeth out and had punched his poor ugly little nose until the blood squirted from it. He was blind with rage, and with pity for Bundle. And all the time someone was shouting shrilly. "Hit him, Tod—hit the beggar—I'm wi' you. Knock his bally face off for stealing your money—I'm wi' you;" and as his blood let out his rage he grew conscious that it was Luke Lyttle, who was ever so much smaller than himself and had never spoken to him before. Luke was hanging on to Pike's back with arms and legs and clawing at the enemy for all he was able. Tod fought in grim silence, but Luke was calling Pike by every ornamental name his seven-year-old vocabulary permitted.

It was not a dignified fray at all, but they managed to do some fine execution. Pike's shirt was torn to ribbons—that was Luke's share; and one of his eyes was larger than it used to be—that was Tod's—when he finally secured the two of them and knocked their defiant heads together and cuffed them into silence.

"There now! dirty little varmints you be, I'll break your necks. Keep still! What do 'ee mean by coming at me both together like that?"

"You kep' Bundle," said Tod, breathless but defiant, through swollen nose.

"An' you took his money; I arn't goin' to see you thieve it off him," Luke bellowed, raging against Pike's compelling hands.

"Be quiet or I'll drown you both along o' Bundle. I said as you could have him for a shilling, didn't I? Pay me that an' you can have him. Sevenpence aren't enough for a dog."

"I got no shillin'," Tod objected.

"Then I'll drown him."

"No you won't. Hold on—I'll pay you a penny a day till it's a shillin'. Mrs. Bell gives me a penny

if I work, an' I'll give it you an' that'll make it. Now you give him me," said angry Tod.

"Honest you will?"

"Honest."

"All right—take him then. Git over, you thief."

Pike stooped and untied the rope. But Bundle, terror stricken, slipped between his hands and Tod's and was gone up the glen like the wind. Tod and Luke, it must be said, looked sheepish, and Pike laughed.

"Bundle says 'No offense, Tod, but he doesn't like the looks of 'ee'—an' he's pretty damn ugly himself."

Tod was too chagrined and too deeply stung by this open desertion to do more than strive manfully against a treacherous voice as he turned on his tormentor.

"Aw—choose a fellow your own size, will you? I aren't big enough to tackle you again—an' you've got my money."

Pike turned away laughing. "Say, fellows, come on—I'm going to get that lantern. Mine's broke."

But the two who had fought for that renegade and thief, Bundle, did not accept the jovial invitation.

They remained on the hillside, whence for the next hour they relieved their torn feelings by heaving down stones at Pike whenever a chance offered, until he charged up the steep after them, swearing fearful vengeance aloud. And a while after that Luke went home to his tea, and Tod wandered up to the moor in great loneliness of spirit.

Bundle, conscious in every doggish instinct how narrow had been his escape, fled onward far up the glen—tail humbly low, ears laid backward, eyes set for the haunts that had given him refuge many times before. At his heels trooped in fancy the avenging boys—with Pike, whose dinner was lining Bundle's stomach. Bundle's back was toward the declining sun, the sea, and all that pertained to Pike, until two miles of valley and stream and wood lay between them. Then on the silent hillside, with lolling tongue and heaving flank, Bundle paused to breathe and consider. No pursuers were in sight. Only the squirrels chattered, and the rabbits, whom Bundle in other hours loved to terrify with clamor and onslaught, bobbed peacefully about their evening calls. From these Bundle of to-night turned away, and with black muzzle pointing once more

toward the setting sun, slunk like the dog he was, by cover and shadow back to Staley Crags and the sea. High on the cliffside slunk Bundle, mindful of Pike; till at last with questioning nose low in the grass, and eager whine, he rose by crooked, devious ways upward and up—then out upon the moor, through the brushing heather and waving bracken, westward to a little figure that sat alone in the eye of the yellow sun. To him Bundle crept fawning, and thrust a wet black nose against his cheek and licked with moist tongue the unchildish, grieved face. And bruised Tod, turning, saw two clear eyes of brown grateful love, and flung his arms about Bundle's neck, bursting into a passion of childish sobs.

"Oh, Bundle—you didn't mean it. You didn't run away from my face—I was sure you didn't Oh, dear—dear Bundle."

So Tod and Bundle wept together, and kissed each other's wet noses till both were tear-bedewed; and presently when Tod was thus beguiled of his loneliness, Bundle broke into a transport of frisking; and with high waving tail and ears erect invited: "Come and play."

Over and through the long growth of heather; hiding behind the bracken, high, waving, thick; with shrill whistle and dodging of Tod, and bounding, yelping delight of Bundle—they played while the sun dipped into the purple and golden seas. Tod and Bundle; Bundle and Tod! And when Tod's young legs sank to the evening-scented heath in merry fatigue they two sat by the cliff edge and, panting together, watched while the changing skies sent across the water loving promise of happy future days.

Then they wended their way downward to old Mrs. Bell's, while Tod whispered to Bundle of how he was mortgaged to Pike; explaining

"But I don't mind the five pence now, I don't mind it a bit, Bundle."

Thenceforth Bundle slept in the back garden, on guard over the bug-house.

* * * * * * * *

Up on the heights the nights were growing cooler. In the dwarf wood under the hill the old leaves of last year were being covered up by the new ones that were dropping every day, and the squirrels were scolding about the scarcity of sleeping rooms and the

high price of nuts. Bundle's attention was sorely divided between the squirrels and Tod, for master and man were abroad together.

As the two passed by Mr. Lyttle's meadow land Tod was aware of Luke on the far side of the hedge. It was a few days after the fight, and the friendship was a shy one yet. Luke looked on at Bundle's efforts for a while, following slowly the sprawling line of the hedge but keeping with slight constraint on his own side.

At last Luke made an advance in slow childish treble:

"Did Bundle come back to you?"

"Yes," awkwardly. Then silence fell again till Luke said:

"Pike's got a black eye where you hit him, Tod. My father says, 'Serves him right!' "

"I'll bet he's got a black stomach, too," said that swashbuckling Tod, grinning, and Luke inquired vaingloriously:

"Did you see me punch him in the head, Tod?"

"I seen you punch him all over," said Tod. After this exchange of courtesies silence lasted again till Tod and Bundle had reached the end of the field.

Then Luke, measuring the air with dirty fists:

"I say, do you know where there's a frog as big as that?"

Tod was arrested. By the measurement it was a very large frog.

"No, do you?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"Down close to Bailey's, I'll show you if you don't believe it."

"As big as that?" queried Tod, measuring.

"Bigger——Big as *that*. He's the biggest frog on earth."

"Honest?" said grave Tod.

Luke drew a grimy forefinger across a small windpipe. "Hope to die."

It was the ultimate oath in Staley Crags. To doubt further were insult. Tod whistled to Bundle.

"Show him! I'll come. Hi, Bundle!"

So the ice was broken again. The three slid and scrambled together down to Bailey's, and there sure enough was the frog as Luke had said. Then so absorbed were they in measuring him, and afterwards tickling him to see how far he would jump,

that the ice floes thawed unnoticed and drifted far away, and the boys were friends.

Bundle thrust himself between for notice. Luke fondled a shaggy ear.

"He's a nice dog," said he, tentatively.

"I'm teaching him to play dead. And he can jump—he can jump as high as your head," bragged Tod with suppressed enthusiasm.

"Crikey! He must be jolly. Finny Thompson says his dog Spot can stand on his head in their back yard. Can Bundle do that?"

"Not yet." Tod looked anxious for a moment, then brightened. "Bundle can beat any dog in Staley Crags, running. He's some hound you see, Bundle is."

Bundle's tail waved complacently.

"Yes, he's great to run," admitted Luke. "Do you beat him, Tod?"

"No."

"Well, but, if he steals. You'll have to beat him then, Tod, you know."

"Yes, but he won't steal any more. He only did it because he was hungry," explained gentle Tod.

"Oh!" Luke hesitated. Childhood does not pass

delicate matters over in silence; moreover Luke was a gentlemanly boy.

"Tod, when Pike said that—about your mother, you know—the other day, I didn't laugh. Honest, I didn't."

And Tod for answer pulled flattered Bundle's other ear and reddened with pleasure; then announced presently with great diffidence.

"I've got a bug-house in the back-garden. If you come up I'll show you."

Luke, slender, grimy, debonair, gentleman to his small finger tips—Tod, penniless, ugly, great and gentle of heart—and nondescript Bundle, some hound, some thief—trailed Indian fashion up the hill.

CHAPTER III.

THE PUFFING HOLE.

"What let's do, Tod?"

"I dunno. Let's do something different to-day."

"Yes, I'm tired of doing all the same old things every day like the other fellows. I want to do something new."

After they had said this they put their hands in their pockets and thought deeply for ten seconds, while Bundle eyed them in hope. It was very difficult to be original, so after a fruitless pause, Tod said, "Come on up on the moor, an' I'll think up something bime by."

The two were now eight respectively, and their friendship was of that order that when the tried guardians of either wanted one of them they hunted first for the other. Even Bundle knew the rule was a good one for results, though he very seldom needed it.

Presently the drumming heath breeze blew an inspiration into Tod's head. "Let's go," said he, "down the Puffing Hole, an' find out where all the water goes to."

"Yes, let's; an' I'll go an' fetch my lantern," said Luke. Lanterns were a very old story by this time, but they could charm still.

"Yes, an' it'll help us to see; but I daresay there'll be light enough. It's a big place where the water goes in, you know."

So Luke went and got his lantern without mentioning the matter to his mother and together they set off for the Puffing Hole.

Far down the beetling face of a cliff, some distance upshore from Staley Crags was a low browed irregular hole that yawned forbiddingly to the ocean and the sunlight. The waves swung and danced about it playfully on summer days, and the white spray lifted the long glistening curtain of seaweed that hung about the portals, and swayed it frolicsomely to and fro on its bosom. Tough seagrass and heather grew in the clefts around, out of reach of high water; and the jags and ledges of granite made a hazardous kind of path downward, by which

anything in the nature of a goat or a small boy might reasonably descend. Bundle did not particularly fancy the enterprise, but rather than be left behind he followed.

Tod said it was fortunate that the tide was out, because there would be more light. Also that left exposed a broad slippery ledge which led unevenly around the interior of the entrance cave. It was not the first time Tod had been here. This was the kind of place especially adapted to a young man of his tastes; and besides, other boys of the village frequently went there to play at adventure.

But to-day these two were particularly venturesome and full of spirit.

"Tod, let's go in further'n any of the other fellows. Let's go in till it stops—we've got my lantern," said Luke, and Tod was perfectly agreed.

Inside, the cave was very spacious and high, the dark jagged roof rising into the very heart of the cliff, and covered here and there with a beautiful waving drapery that looked like fern, and was.

It was very cool in here. Behind them the cave's mouth looked like the shining gateway into the world. The water whispered and washed silkily

among the crannies of the wet walls, and sometimes a playful spur of some Atlantic roller broke with a musical boom against the cave's mouth and shut off the light for a second; then the swell came riding in, leaping up against the walls and dashing showers of spray upon the three adventurers. Then Bundle's barks awoke the reverberating echoes. The hoary ocean was in frolicsome mood to-day and would have not injured a matchbox. The sunny water stretching beyond the cave's mouth was harmless and bright, and the two children were very young.

"Tisn't only the water what made the Puffing Hole. Mr. Morrison says an earthquake helped, a long time ago," Tod asserted.

"Earthquake, what's that?"

"It's when the earth quakes. This way"—here Tod with dreadful suddenness shook Luke's shoulders, which was easy to him—"an' if you happen to be standing anywhere near, a big hole opens like this an' you drop right down. I saw a picture of it in one of Mr. Morrison's books," said Tod.

"An' was the people dropping down?" asked Luke in a shocked voice.

"Not then. You couldn't see them, 'cos they'd gone already. But I saw a house just going down sideways, like that." Tod tilted his two hands obliquely to show.

The gruesomeness of this idea occupied them both for a minute, then Luke said in a lowered voice, "Tod, d'you think anybody dropped down here when this earthquake came?"

"No," said Tod, bravely, but involuntarily looking around, "no, I don't think anybody dropped down here, 'cos Mr. Morrison didn't tell anything about it. I think he'd be sure to know if they had."

This satisfied them both, and just then the silvery body of a fish gleamed in the water and they at once forgot about the earthquake and the uncomfortable people who might have dropped down.

Very soon a jutting spur of rock narrowed the cave to a deep gully through which the water swirled with a loud murmur.

Clambering perilously past the obstacle they came into a second cave so large and great that they could scarcely see its confines. Sea caves hollowed out by water alone do not usually afford much footing, but here the rocks were split and torn fantastically

by other forces, and offered ledges and niches and fissures in plenty. Below, water ran and tinkled and crept; far above it tinkled and dripped unexpectedly on their faces, and the great dim place began somehow to feel vasty to little boys.

If either old Mrs. Bell or Mrs. Lyttle had seen them at that moment very likely the little boys would have been well whipped and put to bed.

"I'm goin' to light my lantern in a minute," Luke announced; and Tod said "Yes, it would make them see better."

But just at that instant the ledge they were standing on ceased in a great cleft, full of water at the bottom. A wide passage led out of the cave to the right, and further along they could see faint daylight falling all around from somewhere and making everything quite discernible.

"I know what that is; it's the way up to the Puffing Hole on the moor, where the water flies up," said Tod.

"Is it? Crikey! Let's climb out that way instead of goin' back. None of the fellows has done that but us."

Such an ambition as that was irresistible and they

hastened on without wasting any words. It was very dim where they were; but strong in the conviction that Tod was right and that this was the way up to daylight they forgot their creepy feelings and did not wait to light the lantern.

But Bundle, though he had so far refrained from expressing his opinion, had disapproved of this expedition from the first. Now he stopped, and raising his tapering muzzle into the air, sniffed suspiciously for a moment, and then gave vent to a long unhappy howl that brought Tod to him with a leap.

"Bundle, Bundle, good dog. Come on. What's the matter, Bundle?"

But it was several minutes before Bundle would consent to come on, and when he did advance at last it was close upon the boys' heels, with lowered head, and tail standing out straight and spine bristling. The boys laughed, for it was plain that Bundle was afraid. But suddenly, as a low rumbling growl came from him, they turned quiet and glanced round nervously. What did Bundle see that they didn't?

Something dark and undetermined lay on the narrow ledge just in front of them. They had taken it

at first for a projection of the rock or a heap of loosened stones; but it was plain that it was neither. Besides, it was not dark enough. It had a pale whitish color that was lighter than the rock. It was very quiet, but Tod and Luke did not want to go any nearer to it. They stood close together and motionless, but Bundle pushed between their legs and, advancing warily, sniffed two or three times at the object; then threw back his head and again broke into long dismal howling.

"What's the matter with him, Tod? Let's go back. I wish I'd lit my lantern," whispered little Luke.

"I wish too. It's so dark we can't see. Luke," Tod whispered, bravely, "don't be frightened, I think it's a skeleton."

At this awful discovery contagious fear took them both, and they backed away at peril of their necks. A few feet removed from the spot their courage rallied.

"Skeletons are dead," said Luke, solemnly. "Tod, now I think somebody did drop down here in the earthquake after all, an' that's him."

"Yes, I think it is," Tod answered with awed

pity. "An' he didn't know how to get out—an' nobody ever found him till we came."

"Let's light my lantern, Tod. You light it, an' —an' I'll watch him."

"All right; stand clos't up to me, then."

Bundle's howls were waking unused echoes that fluttered round the cave like live things; but with the light the boys felt much braver and crept softly back to see. It was indeed the skeleton of a man, lying along the narrow ledge out of reach of the tide, and his skull grinned silently at their frightened faces out of the mildewed and wormeaten mass that had once been his clothing. How long had he been there? was the awful question that rang in the children's heads. There was no question now of going on—for it would have been impossible to step over *that*. Tod called Bundle off in whispers, and the two boys tiptoed away tremblingly over the rocks, glancing round fearfully and holding fast to each other for company.

Something swift and leathery swooped out from a dark corner and narrowly missed striking Luke in the face. He jumped back in a fright though he knew it was only a bat, missed his footing and

grabbed at Tod, who was badly frightened himself. A jagged rock, standing up from the ledge, saved them both from falling headlong. But they came down on it together with a crash, and such a terrible pain shot through Luke's ankle that he screamed out in agony.

Tod was up in an instant and helping Luke to rise. But Luke was unable to get up.

"Oh, Luke, I'll help you; I'll carry you. Try to get up. Hush, don't cry." Tod put his hand over Luke's mouth. The terrible skeleton of the dead man was just around the corner.

"I can't get up," said Luke, in a sobbing frightened whisper. "I've broke my foot. Lift me up under my arms, Tod, an' I'll try that way."

Tod put his strong young arms under Luke's shoulders and tugged and panted until he raised him to his well foot.

"Put your arms round my neck, quick, Luke, an' I'll try to carry you on my back. Anyway I can drag you."

Luke did as he was told, biting his lips to keep in the groans, and Tod did his best because he knew he was strong. But the desperate pilgrimage did

not last long. The progress over the sharp rocks, even had it been possible for it to last, was so painful that poor Luke fainted; and Tod, terror stricken, fell on his knees above him, believing him dead.

They did not leave that place. One child was relieved of his terrors at least. The other one, kneeling beside him, begging and imploring that Luke would not die, but would get up and let him, Tod, carry him again before the rising tide should catch them—this one suffered terrors enough for both. He might have run away excusably, for he knew by the water that the tide had turned and would make him a prisoner for the night. But to desert Luke in the bottom of the Puffing Hole with the rising tide and the terrible skeleton was not to be thought of for an instant, even though Luke was dead. He pillowed the handsome dark head upon his thighs. When terror stricken tears got the mastery he swept them away with his jacket sleeve, and strove hard not to be a coward and afraid, but to think what he must do.

His dog came and sat on its haunches beside him. Like silent elfin spirits of the place the two gazed out in fear upon the vast chasm and the encroach-

ing black water. Surely if the spirit of the dead man wandered through his long dark home, their loyalty was enough to lay him.

Would anybody come to look for them? Nobody knew where they were, and perhaps people might never think of looking in the Puffing Hole. By and by it would be dark night. Perhaps, Tod thought, if he asked God to put it in people's minds where to look for them, God might. He clasped his hands and whisperingly prayed.

"Our Father which art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name. Oh God, we're down here in the Puffing Hole an' we can't get out; and Luke's fallen down an' killed himself. Oh, please God, put it in people's minds quick where we are, so they'll come an' get us out for Jesus' sake; 'cos you know I can't leave Luke. And Oh God, please help me to keep from thinking about the skeleton, Amen."

No answer came. Perhaps God could not hear prayers from the inside of the earth. And the water rose and rose, and made strange noises that began a long way off, and drew nearer and repeated and echoed till they seemed to come from all quarters at once. Bundle was afraid, knowing that Tod

was afraid, and sat up very close. Then all at once, Luke said in a low voice, "Tod."

"Yes? Oh, Luke, are you alive? I'm so glad. I thought you were dead all the time," said the boy, with a sob.

"My foot hurts awfully. Are we out of the Puffing Hole now, Tod?"

"No, but I don't care, now. You're alive; an' your father an' mother'll miss you an' keep on lookin' till they find out where you've gone. And when I'm not there to get the water for Mrs. Bell's tea to-night she'll miss me, too," said Tod, hopefully. Instinct told him he must keep Luke's courage up.

"Tod—maybe they won't come to-day. You won't go away an' leave me here in the Puffing Hole?"

"Not me. I'll stay with you for ever an' ever till they come," said the stout heart. Then the small gray eyes looked at the dark and the tide, and wondered silently how long it would be.

But soon an inspiring idea came to him.

"Luke, are you asleep?"

"No, I'm just waitin'. My foot hurts so, Tod; I'll have to shout in a minute."

"Luke, I know what to do. The tide's up now, an' even if your foot wasn't broke we couldn't get out. But Bundle can. He's a good swimmer, Bundle is—better than any dog in Staley Crags. I'll tie your shoe around his neck an' then they'll know, an' Bundle'll show them where we are."

Swiftly the idea was put into effect. The operation of removing the shoe was extremely painful despite Tod's gentle touch; but at last it was off and tied by the strings round Bundle's neck, and the good dog was made to understand what was required of him.

Bundle looked at Tod and whined. He did not want to leave his master in that place; but Tod was standing up peremptorily, crying "Home—Home!" Bundle yapped and whimpered in protest, but went on obediently to the place where the water covered the ledge; and then they heard him "plop" into it and his voice ceased. They were too young to doubt that Bundle would bring help, or to understand the hazard of the poor dog's mission.

It grew darker and darker, and damp and cold. Night was coming on. It was impossible to discern the water now, or anything. It was far darker

than on the moor on a starless night. Tod was cramped and stiff. He could feel Luke shiver, and the goose flesh running in chills up and down his own body. He wrapped his jacket around Luke as well as he could, and, sucking his cheeks in between his teeth to keep them from chattering out loud, went on waiting for Bundle and help. Every little while he would doze off into troubled sleep, and wake again in terror, having dreamed that the skeleton had crept quietly round the corner and was looking at them.

But once when he wakened his heart gave such a sudden bound that it seemed to jump up his throat, for he had dreamed that he heard Bundle bark. The cave was full of shadows—huge, moving shapes that flickered here and there on the gloom faster than his eyes could follow—and surely there was light of some kind. Was that the drip and tinkle of the water, or a voice, faint and distant, calling, "Luke?"

Suddenly everything burst into reality at once—red flaming light, men's shadows, Mr. Morrison's voice, Mr. Lyttle shouting "Luke," Bundle barking. Tod gathered his lungs together, and put forth a whistle like the shriek of a locomotive. Bundle

burst into furious yelps of joy. Tod heard the men shout and laugh, saw the light flicker and dance frantically; then they all burst around the point at once, and Tod, whose body was shaking all over as with ague, called in a thin little voice, "Here we are."

"Where? Shout again, lads—where are you?"

"Up here."

Six able bodied men swept the torches about and saw a figure with old elfin face crowned with shaggy hair, peering down on them. Its feet hung over the abyss and its arms were clasped protectingly round another small body. All around was the blackness of the chasm, and deep, hungry waters licking at the bottom of all.

Mr. Lyttle whispered while he hurriedly climbed, "Good Lord." It was a prayer.

"Hold on fast, Tod, boy. Is Luke asleep?"

"No. He's fell down an' broke his foot, an' we couldn't get out, so we sent Bundle," said the trembling voice. "And there's a skeleton round the corner, Mr. Morrison, sir."

"A what?"

"A skeleton. We found him; an' we think he

must have been here ever since the earthquake, sir."

No one understood what Tod meant. They thought that the loneliness and fear had set his mind wandering perhaps, but they were making much faster time over the jagged, slippery foot-holds than he and Luke had made. And soon Luke was in his father's strong arms, and wrapped in his father's coat; and Tod's ague was beginning to improve since he got his jacket back—and the terrible vigil of the Puffing Hole was over forever.

"Wrap the little man up and bring him along carefully, Morrison—bless his brave heart," said Mr. Lyttle. But other things were in Tod's head.

"Aren't you going to see the skeleton, sir?" he inquired. It was incredible that they were going to pass that wonder by.

"What skeleton, Tod?" said Mr. Morrison, looking carefully at him.

"The one round there. We were goin' to climb out of the Puffing Hole, but we had to come back 'cos he was in the way. He's lyin' down on the ledge with his clothes on, but you can tell he's only bones inside; an' his head's stickin' out at one end."

"Tod," said the gentleman, gravely, "if this is a nightmare of yours it's a choice one." Then he called to his brother-in-law, "Lyttle, wait just five minutes, will you, while a couple of us go round and investigate this two-o'clock-in-the-morning tale of Tod's?"

When Tod had guided them to the place, however, and the light of the smoking torches lit up the terrible secret which the murderous Puffing Hole had kept to itself all these years, Mr. Morrison made very little comment, much less than Tod had expected. One of the bony legs was seen to be broken in two just below the knee.

This told the tale of the slow tragedy that had taken place; of the victim's long wait for death, and why he had not escaped. But no one knew who he was until one of the men, stirring the decayed, mildewed rags with his foot, suddenly struck something hard. The object was picked up and examined, and turned out to be a small tin box, in which was a large amount of money, some in coin, but the bulk in Bank of England notes. Then they recalled a famous crime which had taken place years before in a town not far from Staley Crags,

when a thief had broken into the bank one night, and escaped with a sum almost identical with that in the tin box. No trace had ever been found of him, though all England had been scoured in search of him. But the old Puffing Hole at Staley Crags had known where he was, and had kept both him and his booty safe and secret for all these years.

Trudging homeward under the sinking moon, Tod felt his conscience active because Mr. Morrison said so little to him. That gentleman was endeavoring to recall the days when he was eight, and what his notions of friendship and honor had been at that age. He wondered, too, what kind of a man this ugly waif might make some day if given a good chance. He determined that Tod should have his chance. He could not then foresee that Tod would settle the question of his own future for himself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POPPY LADY.

It was autumn now. One Saturday Tod stood expectantly, half in, half out of old Mrs. Bell's back door. He had a pressing engagement with Luke for this afternoon, and was waiting her permission to be gone.

Bundle, too, was waiting—at a distance. Bundle was aware that Mrs. Bell was no dog fancier, so he never took unnecessary chances.

But the old lady would not see the pair, and Tod waited till he was tired.

"Please, ma'am, can I go now?" he said at last.

"Where to?" Mrs. Bell was so surprised that he felt abashed.

"Just out," he said diffidently; "if you don't want me any more, ma'am. Luke's found a bee nest on top of Wheale Cut, an' he's goin' to show it this afternoon. Nobody knows but him," explained Tod, dropping his voice to an impressive whisper.

Mrs. Bell snorted. She believed that favors, to be appreciated, should be given grudgingly.

"Luke's mother ought to keep him closer to home. Bee nests! He'll break his neck next, climbing them cliffs the way you and him does. Go on, if you want to. Only don't come back here with your face any uglier than it is from your bee nests. And mind you shut the gate."

"Yes, ma'am."

He never made her an improper answer. Neither did he ever wait for the chance of being recalled. Mrs. Bell screamed once more that they must shut the gate, but Bundle and Tod were alike stricken with the desire to sprint.

"Drat the boy!" murmured Mrs. Bell as she saw him slide around a boulder in the distance. "He won't ever go till I let him, but lor'—how he goes then."

It was a beautiful day, such a holiday as a boy's heart loves. The sun hung directly above the rocks of Wheale Cut, a ravine supposed to have been formed by mining operations in ancient times. Large and shaggy, but with a dawning boyish earnestness lately dwelling around his eyes, Tod worked

his way toward Luke's, eyeing the spot speculatively as he went. In the rock-sown open spaces the faithful henchman, shaggy, too, as was most fitting, pursued imaginary rabbits like the degenerate dog he was.

The two came out upon the stubble where a zigzag wheat field had lately lain. It was here that the red poppies had grown, and nodded their heads in pride when the yellow waves bent away from them in the breeze. Here all at once there arose a shrill cry of distress, so sharp and close at hand that even Bundle forsook the rabbits and came to see.

To Tod, turning, it seemed as if a whole clump of the vanished poppies was returning at once to life, as a small vision in a scarlet dress rose from amongst the stubble which had caught and tripped her feet, and came toward him.

As she came she extended her tiny hand.

It had been cut by the harsh stalks, and was bleeding; and Tod, ever instinctively gentle to small weak things, sprang hastily forward to her aid.

She was only about six years old, and as she ran her feet twinkled in shiny black slippers and short

white socks, above which shone two little bare knees almost as white, but now cruelly scratched. Around her face her tousled curly hair held the golden gleam of corn waving in the sunlight, and through the hardly suppressed tears her eyes turned to Tod with blue tender brilliance.

"Oh—Oh!" she cried with a short sob as Tod most chivalrously took the injured member into his own dark, clumsy hand—"Oh!"

Tod pulled off his cap and softly wiped away the dirt and the trickle of blood,—he never had owned a handkerchief.

But the scratch was a most unkind one and seemed to hurt very much, and the little scarlet clad maid was dolefully endeavoring not to cry. Through the tears her sweet blue eyes looked up at Tod forlornly. "She is a Poppy Lady," said Tod to himself, and wondered how he might console her. Then, as softly as he would have smoothed a butterfly's torn wing, he stooped and kissed the tiny pretty fingers lying in his hand.

"Oh!" said the Poppy Lady again, almost forgetting the severity of her wounds in this unlooked for diversion. She seemed inclined to examine her

hand, but clapped it instead upon her scratched knee while she regarded him. "I'm Jessie Dunham," she said; "who are you?"

"Tod Payson," said Tod, feeling unusually abashed, and kicking with his heel at a clump of the tough stubble.

But Jessie it appeared had not really seen him before, for now she was examining him attentively. "What makes—your face so funny, Tod?" she asked at last in a soft awestruck whisper.

"Nothing," said Tod. His weather-bronzed skin had taken a deeper tint, but such a kind, pretty impertinence he regarded rather as a mark of friendly interest in himself. "I was born that way," he added confidentially. "You know nothing makes the way you're born. It just happens—an' then you have to stay that way all your life."

Jessie was silent, impressed by this terrible fatalism. But after a moment of awe a hopeful idea cleared her face. "Oh, but you can change yourself a little," she cried. "Everybody can. Look, you can do like this,"—she screwed her features into a contortion which she deemed would best meet the

defects of Tod's—"that would make you look quite different," she announced.

Tod did not laugh. His eight years had brought him pathetic wisdom while they had left him his simplicity.

"Yes, but it wouldn't do," he whispered. "I used to try it sometimes when I was little like you; but it was no use. It only made me worse."

"Did it?" said Jessie regretfully. Then she smiled sweetly at him. "Oh, but you mustn't mind it much—'cos you're nice, you see; an' so it doesn't matter. An' I've got a tricycle; you can ride it if you like, an' I'll show you how to work your feet," she added comfortingly.

She was a child of the city where streets are level and straight and planned with a special view to tricycles. Tod forgot to accept her kind offer. He was wondering privately what kind of contrivances tricycles might be; while at the same time he wondered about her. So beautiful and friendly a baby he had never before seen.

"Wouldn't you like to? It's got red wheels," she explained. But just then a masterful young voice that Tod knew rose from the bushes. The

little maid glanced round guiltily, fright and glee contending on her lips. "Oh, I forgot. Cousin Luke was looking for me—an' I ran away," she whispered.

It was too late now, for the bushes parted swiftly and there stood Luke, hot, breathless, with indignant eyes.

"*Clever!*—Running away an' getting me into trouble," he cried crossly. "Where'd you get her, Tod? What's she been doing?—she's all bloody."

"She fell down. Don't scold her, Luke," Tod interceded.

"She shouldn't run away. She's too little, an' I told her she shouldn't," Luke said loftily. But since he had seen the wounds he was not so very cross.

He stooped concernedly with slim boyish grace. He had all that young elegance which Tod lacked, and moreover he had a handkerchief. He drew it forth—a little check bordered one and not too clean—and proceeded to tie up the knee.

"Crikey—what a cut! The blood's all down to your socks. Hold your leg straight a minute, or I can't tie it. They're lookin' everywhere for you—mother an' Aunt Dora are. I shouldn't wonder if

you got a scoldin'." Then on Tod he turned a look of soured intelligence. "I can't go now—where you an' me was goin', you know. There's company at our house, an' I've got to stay an' take care of *her.*"

He slid his innermost feelings into the pronoun, and rising, led her away.

But the Poppy Lady, who ought to have been depressed by her misdeeds, was thinking of her first knight. Turning, she waved him a backward adieu, calling in a friendly voice, "Good-bye; my knee's awf'ly bad, too, but you hadnt' time to fix that, had you, Tod?"

"No; I wisht I had," said Tod, smiling and almost pulling Bundle's ear off in innocent sincerity.

He and Bundle watched the flash of her red dress through the trees as she went away with Luke towards his father's house. Tod read in it no omen of the future. A little seed had dropped into his heart; but as he was only eight he did not know it, and so was quite innocent and safe. Then he and Bundle climbed alone to the top of Wheale Cut to look for the bee's nest; but not finding it, he

strayed off in some other direction equally remote from Mrs. Bell's.

Mrs. Dunham, whom Luke had called Aunt Dora, paid a long visit that autumn to Mrs. Lyttle, who had been an old school friend of hers years before. Mrs. Lyttle had lived in the north before she met Annette's brother and married him. Between the two ladies there was really no relationship whatever.

Tod came to know Jessie very well. He was the ugliest child in the world, Mrs. Dunham declared; yet Jessie actually seemed to prefer him to Luke. Luke, be it said, was not very tolerant of girls in those days; for he was popular, and his desire was toward "the fellows."

Tod served Jessie with a serious boyish courtesy that knew nothing of itself or its source. Luke, outraged by his defection, called him "a bally old auntie" for his pains. Tod worried for days over this, for he did not wish to be an "auntie." And indeed he was nothing of the kind. But he loved all the beautiful things in earth, air and water, and he could not help but love the little Poppy Lady,

who was the most wonderful and beautiful of them all.

* * * * * * * *

After that there were other spots in Tod's boy-life in which Jessie Dunham figured. With her mother she came at long intervals to visit in the beautiful coast valley, but never remained so long as on that first occasion. The last time she came Tod was somewhere in the neighborhood of fourteen—a great, tall, quiet, studious boy who stood at the threshold of manhood, but had not yet crossed; and Jessie was a lovely and dainty miss who, if she still retained her first preferences, had grown much more chary about revealing them. No one could have said now that she preferred Tod to Luke. Tod, at least, could not. He did not presume to think it, indeed; and they had strangely little to say to each other.

But on almost the last day, as he was walking with Bundle, who had now grown stiff and sedate, he saw her coming up the path toward him. Near him grew the bright, silken, red poppies. He stooped and gathered them; and then as the two passed each other rather stiffly but pleasantly, he

gave them to her. Jessie smiled and blushed rosily; and because she did, Tod strode away with Bundle at heel, his bronzed face darkened almost into maroon.

She went away next day. And not for many years did she come again into the west country.

CHAPTER V.

A PROFESSION.

Mr. Morrison, as we know, had certain ideas of his own regarding Tod's future. For this reason Tod was not allowed to go to work in the tin mine at fourteen as the poor boys of the village usually did, but was kept at his studies like a gentleman's son. One memorable day, however, he suddenly cast aside his boyhood and became a man, and quietly took the matter of his future into his own hands. It happened in this way.

The divine and that sweet gentle lady, his wife, who sincerely loved young Tod, were sitting alone together one evening when the latter, now a tall boy of fifteen and already giving promise of great physical development, came to the rectory. His remote gray eyes were alight with indignant fire. Some boyish but strong purpose seemed to have transformed him into a man overnight. He stated his errand without preface.

"Mr. Morrison, I'd like to go to work now, sir, if you'll let me. I'm fifteen and I don't need any more schooling."

"Go to work!—at what, Tod?"

"In the mines, sir—if you think best. I'll do whatever you say. You've always been very kind to me, but I'm old enough to earn my own living now; and I'd like to begin."

"But, Tod, I have never intended that you should go to the mines. You have shown yourself such a clever student that Mrs. Morrison and I planned long ago to help you to some profession when you are old enough. You know that will require years of study yet."

For a moment Tod's resolve seemed shaken. He stood beside the table, straight and tall, and gravely regarded the lamp, as though debating the matter with himself. He had shot up remarkably during the past year, and his height and breadth, which were a great discomfort to himself, were assuming a massive shapeliness of proportion indicative of strength. Nature had not been utterly unkind. It was a physique that promised a splendid man.

"I never hoped for anything like that, sir," he

said at last. "I'd have liked it very much, and it was kind of you to think of it. But I'm afraid I can't wait—it would take too long. I must begin to earn my own living now."

The boy's tone was not vehement, but it was final. The clergyman looked at him for a moment or two without replying; then he drew forward a chair. "Tod, boy, sit down. Now tell me the trouble," he said kindly.

Tod winced and looked aside suddenly, his face contracting. The tactful lady, divining by the boy's mien that he wanted only a man's help to-night, rose and had left them alone together before Tod, recovering himself by a defiant effort, looked straight at his questioner.

"I'm fifteen, sir," he repeated stoically. "If there was anything about my mother that I haven't been told, I'm old enough now to hear it."

The clergyman had half expected this. To himself he said, "poor little lad;" then aloud: "Certainly, Tod. I have been on the point two or three times lately of telling you the little I know. I will tell you now if you wish to hear."

Then in the quiet library, with the lamplight

casting Tod's elfin profile upon the wall, and the firelight playing, sometimes lovingly, sometimes fantastically, with the shadows under his great brows, the gentleman rehearsed the story of that summer night on the moor—of the lost baby, and the sad dead mother whose prayer had been so speedily heard. Of the funeral which took place two days later, and of the unmarked grave which Tod already knew in the corner of the churchyard on the hill; and also how the speaker had made inquiry in all the nearby Cornish towns, but had failed to obtain any clue to her identity,—whence she had come, or whither she had been bound.

"The paper that was round your neck I have kept for you, Tod; I thought you would like to have that. It and her clothes are the only relics I have to give you. You were plump and well-clad, but she was greatly emaciated. I am afraid she sacrificed herself for you."

Tod took the paper. It had turned yellow in the fourteen years, and the penciled characters were growing illegible. All that he knew of his mother was there. The sheet crackled a little in his brown fingers, and shading his eyes from the lamp he

looked at it for a long time. "Todhunter Payson, aged eleven months. God raise up protectors for thee, my little son."

Another question, Mr. Morrison divined, was in the boy's heart, but Tod evidently knew not how to frame it. The gentleman cast about how best to relieve the difficulty.

"She had no jewelry of any kind, Tod—not even a ring. Very likely she had sold everything for food. Her marriage finger, however, was worn very thin below the first joint, and there was a faint mark on it as if she had worn a ring until a little while before. You're only fifteen, Tod; but you know a woman would keep that until everything else was gone."

Assuredly he was but fifteen—this Tod who was so tall. He sat his chair like a stoic; then suddenly his head fell with a thump on his folded arms, his shoulders shook, and he cried as a little boy cries at school. "Oh, thank you, sir," he said thickly. "Of course I knew it. But Pike—he said something yesterday, and I nearly—killed him for it. But I didn't know myself, and I wanted to ask you, sir. Oh, my dear, poor little mother."

"There, my boy. No one has any right to say such a thing, though I am aware that it has been commonly said. I tried to silence it, but now that you are growing up you can silence it yourself. I fancy you'll make them listen to you before long, Tod," said his friend with a quiet smile.

"Yes, I will," said the boy, raising his head. "I never understood what they meant before. And that's why I want to go to work," he explained eagerly. "I must make them respect her and me, and they never will while I'm a hanger-on. I must be self-supporting. I'd like to begin next week, sir, if you please."

"Down the mine, Tod?"

"Yes, sir. It's what all the other fellows do. But I'm strong, and I can study nights if you think I—if you thought I could"—he stopped, fearing to ask too much.

His patron sat in thoughtful silence for a while. "Well," he said at last," your argument's a strong one and I'm not sure that it isn't correct. We had other plans for you, Tod. But go to work if you like. I'll speak to Mr. Lyttle and he'll probably

take you on. Keep up your studies as much as possible, and we'll see what can be done."

So at fifteen Tod went down the mine. It was thus that he settled the question of his future for himself.

This was the beginning of his training for the profession which he afterwards entered, that of an engineer and mining expert. It was not possible that he could long remain with the rank and file of those workmen underground, for he was an eager student. When he was eighteen his kind and early friend Mrs. Morrison died, and left him half of her fortune so that he might fit himself at once to enter his profession if he chose. Tod put the money in the bank and worked on. It was not that he did not appreciate, and did not revere and love the dead lady's memory. He wished it to be said in future times that he had raised himself by his own efforts; and he clung to his early idea that only in this way could he do honor to his mother's name, which in his heart he believed had been cruelly slandered.

* * * * * * * *

He lost another friend during those years—one of whom few besides himself took much account.

Dear faithful Bundle, having achieved the end for which his shaggy little life had perhaps been given, grew old and was gathered to his doggish forbears. Two lads buried him in stern silence one summer day beside one of the old stone ruins on the moor.

CHAPTER VI.

JESSIE'S MEMORIES.

Into an attic at the top of a city house a tall girl came to look regretfully at a pile of dusty trunks stored in one corner. The room was dim; but as she passed back and forth a narrow blade of sunlight entering through the tiny window split the murk in two, and falling on the dull wall opposite seemed to stab it with radiance; and lighting on the face and neck and fair hair of the girl, transfigured her with a glory almost loving.

She was fair enough without it. Her hair was full of little lights and shadows of its own, in which the sunshine bore no part. There was no blemish on the whiteness of her skin; but in her cheeks the faint warmth merged as imperceptibly as dawn on the hills deepens into daylight. Her mouth was very sweet and delicate; yet if the words should sting, a man would probably forgive; for she was of those women who are born to hold rule over

men's hearts. Such may wound as they will, and still be loved and forgiven.

During all the years that had passed over him with transforming power, Todhunter must have thought many times of this girl, trying perchance to picture her to his mind. But the thought had not been compelling certainly; for he had never visited Manchester, where she lived, though he was in a position these days to do most things he desired. So the careful years, that bring to each man his allotted joys and sorrows, were sending her again to the south.

Mrs. Dunham's health had recently been failing. Jessie had traveled throughout England with her, until finally, it being decided that the invalid needed a mild southern climate, they had bethought them of Staley Crags and their good friends, the Lyttles. To these they were going for a time, until they could secure a house of their own in the valley.

The trunks in the attic were to be packed to-day.

Some one else came running upstairs to the door and looked in, calling reproachfully:

"Jessie, I don't believe you've begun yet. Shall I come in and help?"

"Oh, Ruth," cried Jessie, "if you only knew how I hate the beginning."

"Mercy!" cried the vivacious little person, who had warm, gray, honest eyes, "are you going to cry, dear? Think how nice it will be when you can't see a factory chimney nor a corner shop, and need only wash your face twice a day to be clean. That alone would tempt me above anything, truly!"

"Oh, yes; you're so *excessively* indolent, aren't you?" says poor Jessie, comforted. "It is lovely down there, but you know it means leaving you, Ruth Hardy, and everybody here. Goodness knows when we'll be settled. Meantime you'll get married or something, and I'll never see you again. I'm going to ask Mrs. Lyttle if I can't fetch you down with us. She won't mind, I'm sure. Will you come?"

And this is how it happened that Ruth Hardy, who lived with relatives in a houseful of young cousins and spent half the months of the year with Jessie, went down also to Staley Crags, and bore a part, a very small part, in our story.

A day or two later the two walked together on a busy, familiar road; it was Jessie's leave-taking

of her native city. "Tell me about the place down there," Ruth had said; and Jessie was telling.

"I haven't been there for so long, you know—not since I was twelve. It used to seem to me a long, long way. You travel in the train, and you travel in carriages; last of all you travel on your feet. When you can't go any further without swimming or flying—then you've come to Staley Crags. There's nothing there but space; water and moor and sky—and a poppy or two. There used to be poppies there."

"Must be lonely for them," said Ruth with gravity.

But the story teller laughed. "Don't poke fun at my enthusiasm. Wait till you go. If you're lonely down there it'll be because there's no romance in you, and because you're built on too small a scale to fit."

"Well, what else is there besides poppies?"

"There's a tin mine—which may be more in line with the sordid tastes of some people. There's a queer, wonderful old cave called a Puffing Hole, which those people won't care so much about. There are blue hills, and legends, and gray cliffs standing

up out of the sea; and there are, or were then, two boys."

"Why didn't you put them first?" said the incorrigible. "Of course I knew by those poppies, dear"—But it was apparent that Ruth was not to laugh.

"You didn't—not this time. One of the boys was Luke Lyttle. Luke was a superior little prig, I think. He used to scold me, which made me always afraid of him. The other one was Tod."

"Tod? Is he dead? Or what was the objection to him?" Ruth inquired humbly.

"No, he isn't dead; but he's gone up in the world since those days. I don't suppose he'll remember me; but when I was little he used to be so nice to me I thought he was the most splendid boy in the world. Last time I was down there I was twelve. You know how girls are. One day he came up to me and gave me some poppies, and I wanted to speak to him, but I couldn't. I didn't; and he didn't say a word either. We were both at the silly age. That's the last I saw of Tod."

Smiling, Ruth twirled her parasol to give herself courage, and remarked boldly: "All the same

you're in love with him, my dear. I was right about those poppies."

"No, you weren't. When I was six—yes, perhaps. I idolized him. But that day he gave me the poppies he was almost as tall as a man; and I'd begun to notice how a boy looked, of course. Ruth, he was nice—but he was *so* ugly. Little gray eyes, and a great forehead with a lot of black hair, and a swarthy face. All the same we were such friends that I did want to speak to him. But—well, you'll see him soon; then you'll understand. I can't quite account for when I was six, except that one usually seems to love the ugly doll best at that age."

There was a scandalized silence, while Ruth's sense of the romantic died a violent death. "If you hadn't said that last thing I wouldn't have believed you," she said, "but if you can call him that"— She finished with a gesture that meant disgust.

"I haven't called him anything," Jessie answered with dignity; "neither would I allow anyone else to. Tod was my dear friend. When you see him you'll understand exactly." And Ruth walked on in snubbed silence.

Presently a slight diversion occurred.

Evening was coming on. The road was filled from curb to curb with traffic, and lined on either side with foot travelers returning from town. A loaded 'bus stopped at the near corner and discharged a single passenger—a tall erect man with silver white hair which grew so long and thick about his ears as almost to fall on his shoulders. There was little suggestion of feebleness about him. His eyes were keen and black, and extremely imposing. Reaching the curb he bared his white head, and, regarding the passers-by with an earnestness intent and somewhat peculiar, he commenced to harangue them in a loud voice.

Open-air preaching is common in Manchester. Few of the throng would have delayed their dinners to listen had it not been for the attraction of the man himself. His eloquence was stern and lofty, and of a kind not usually heard under those conditions; his dark eyes were bright and magnetic with belief in himself and his mission. At intervals, as he warmed to his discourse, he shook his head backward with a peculiar gesture, which caused his thick silvered hair to fly out in showers from his neck.

The scene lasted only a few minutes. The crowd grew dense and quiet, and stretching out into the roadway began to impede traffic. It became a policeman's duty to interfere, and the meeting was broken up.

Two little girls and a baby had strayed into the crowd. The sisters had forgotten the baby. For a minute or two the child had sat neglected on the curb; then, no one noticing him, had risen and wandered out into the roadway.

But as the crowd dispersed everyone saw him at once. It seemed that among those many hoofs the child would certainly be killed; and the little sisters stood trembling and crying on the curb, screaming to "Billy" to come back to them. But the white-haired preacher, wrapped in a deep reverie, was also crossing the road. Suddenly he saw the child, and snatching him up swiftly from under the horses' feet bore him safely across. Jessie and Ruth brought the little sisters over a minute later.

A great change had passed over the preacher. Now his white hair seemed to say truly he was old. The high somber look of the enthusiast which had made his features stern had melted, and left them

full of a fine tenderness. Forgetful of the passers-by, he knelt on one knee before the smiling baby, whispering eagerly to it, his dark strenuous thumb caressing lovingly the two little hands lying together in his.

"Little hands," he said, "—little hands. Bands of steel about the heart of a man; stronger than duty—more relentless than time! Have I not resisted them? But I am old now, and the days are long—so long; and my spirit is weak. Lord—when the light is growing dim remember me. Count not my misdeeds, but only what I have endured for Thy sake."

The words had come more and more haltingly; the whisper had grown lower and sadder. The preacher was quite alone with his thoughts and the unconscious baby.

But the little sisters' fingers, pulling at him, seemed to rouse him from his reverie, and he arose and gave the child to them, folding a tiny silver coin into its fat hand. His voice, wonderfully low and gentle, bestowed a benison. "Thou little flower from God's garden—may the good Gardener

watch thee and tend thee well." Then immediately the preacher turned away, and his tall spare figure was swallowed up by the throng.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD FRIENDSHIPS.

One evening, a little later than this, the early dusk was falling across sea and moor and Cornish valley. There had been a summer tempest two days before—one of those storms which make Cornish coasts a terror to shipping—and the long Atlantic rollers were gliding in sullenly, and breaking with boom and uproar and flying spray under the cliff.

Across the moor had come for some time a horseman. It was perhaps only the lonely dusk that invested his figure with a something of magnificence, for he was not to be seen distinctly. He was large and quiet and youthful, and his carriage was that of one familiar with the country, and of undoubted place in it. There was about him an air of quiet authority, and it belonged by right to him; for he was the chief of all those engineers who controlled the development of the Cornish

mines of that section, but recently consolidated under one company. Great Trevanny was no longer an independent mine, but one of many under his charge. Staley Crags was his headquarters and he was returning to it.

Near the valley there met him a quiet gentleman on foot, who said affectionately, "I thought you'd be coming soon, Tod boy; so I took a stroll up this way to meet you." Then that big, grave, youthful horseman alighted and walked beside his patron as in old, old days.

Something intangible yet real, which took the eye captive and held it irresistibly, was written large upon the handsome figure of this new Tod-hunter. It was this which had made him seem magnificent before; and was not his stature merely, which was far beyond the ordinary, but a thing more closely allied to him; something in his nature. So strong, and large, and withal so gentle was he that his mere neighborhood inspired one with a queer, immediate feeling of reliance.

The same thing was in his face. Despite its supreme ugliness the eye returned to it again and

again in unwilling fascination. The features were stamped with an indefinable look of power, as though the soul behind them was dumbly demanding the recognition that was its right. Sometimes one saw a flash of wonderful sweetness and tenderness and honesty; and again, suddenly, only that expression—that something which bespoke the silent mountainous strength lying behind and beneath everything else.

The elder man's hand was upon the younger's shoulder as on a son's. So they had come down together to the old Rectory garden on the hillside.

But now, clear and musical, a rollicking bar of a song whistled out on the evening. The chief engineer's face changed in an instant. The two halted; Mr. Morrison smiled and announced "Luke."

"He's off for London in the morning—on business for the company. We're putting in some new wrinkles in machinery, and Luke knows all the details like a book. He's the only man we have that we could trust with such a matter."

It was the highest authority in the councils of the Company who was speaking; but the dignity

was of the words only. The voice had become again a boy's.

Presently, as the whistler loomed from a clump of trees, it appeared that he, too, was on horseback, and attired for a journey. Luke Lyttle's friends were wont to call him "the cavalier," because of a certain gay and elegant demeanor that was his; also because they liked him so well. His features were as handsome and aristocratic as Todhunter's were not; but between friends such matters were apparently of no moment.

Luke swung lightly to the ground. His voice was pleasant to hear, but hilarious and disrespectful.

"Knew I'd find you two mooning up here as usual. Tod, my dear old elephant, you don't take half enough exercise for a man of your weight. You'll grow fat if you don't mind. Come and see me off for London."

But unfortunately the jester was standing beside the well. Todhunter had made a swift quiet movement.

"I'll help you, my dear friend, to regard my weight with more respect. Don't kick! I hope

your tailor's a good one, Luke—the next few minutes depends on him."

For handsome, irreverent Luke was dangling above the well hole—poised in mid-air by his waist line; and Mr. Morrison was laughing.

"Tod, I say," gasped the victim, "don't drop me for pity's sake. I'll spoil uncle's drinking water. Besides, I have to go to London. I'll recant. Did I say elephant? Excuse me—I meant a bloomin' hippopotamus. Let me down, and I'll tell you some news."

The mighty arm brought him back to the well-curb, and set him down intact, foiling with superb ease his quick attempt at reprisals. "Well, what's the news?" said the gentle voice, "and why for do you set out to-night instead of to-morrow for London?"

"To save time, little one, and because I'm supernumerary in my own home. Mother heartlessly demands my room. Tod, do you remember the Dunhams—your little flame, Jessie Dunham?"

Everyone smiled, and big Todhunter admitted, "I remember."

"They're coming back, I believe, indefinitely. Mr.

Dunham died some years ago, you know, and Mrs. Dunham's health is poor, so they're coming down to try the climate. There's some one else too—a young lady friend of Jessie's I understand. I'm being sacrificed to make room."

Todhunter had no sympathy. He said, "Good enough for you. When do they come?"

"To-morrow—and, my poor friend, I'm unable to be with you," replied the irrepressible. "Reverend Uncle, I commend this inexperienced child to you. Our Todhunter has never looked at a girl in all his short life; and you know how it is with these quiet Behemoths once they're scotched."

Todhunter's pass at the joker would have disabled a grizzly if it had landed, but Luke was wary. Smiling tolerantly, the reverend uncle rejoined, "Luke, I'm afraid you're something of a veteran yourself, for twenty-five."

"Oh, as for me," said Luke, with a beautifully modest air, "I've been under fire before; it was unavoidable—as you'll concede," and his hearers laughed in derision. But privately they agreed with him. He was a handsome fellow, and of such sound and honest metal at bottom.

"I ride Jingo to Treddlestone, and leave him there with Coombs till I return. Come and set me on the way a bit, both of you."

In the soft gloaming they mounted the hillside and came out on the white moor road which wound dimly to the north. A fresh breeze was blowing up here, and the noise of contending waters below bore witness to the violence of the storm that was past.

Soon the shore bent inward to a small cove, and the moor fell away in a sharp declivity to the water's edge. Above the outline of the cliff arose presently a round dark head, followed instantly by a small body that clambered with awkward agility to the level. It was a little boy, who, unobservant of any society, turned back hastily to the brink and drew up some object of his personal belongings after him. Then, rising, he stood stock still and uttered a queer inarticulate scream of fright as his eyes fell all at once on the three friends.

Silhouetted against the background of sky, his pitiable image showed only a gap of sunset where one foot should have been; and he supported himself on that side on a home-made crutch which he

had carefully dragged up the incline after him.

If he was the delinquent he seemed, he was in a bad way, for all these three persons represented law and authority to him; while on Todhunter he had ever looked with fear and misgiving as on the largest man in his community. Suddenly he decided that flight was best, and with his fantastic crutch and his one foot swung off like a shadow across the darkened heath. But Todhunter stopped him with a touch. "Hello, little Jan—don't run away. What is the trouble?"

He had not expected an answer, for he knew the boy was dumb. But Jan stood so still under the captor's hand and his face was so white and terrified that the question was repeated. "Who is it, Jan? Don't be afraid. Is anyone down there?"

Jan could not hear, but he probably understood. He only desired very much to get away from the hand that detained, though it did not hurt him at all; and flinging up his arms in a wild gesture of fear he screamed shrilly. The men looked involuntarily toward the precipice. Todhunter walked swiftly over and looked down; and Jan, forgotten for the moment, picked up his fallen crutch and hob-

bled swiftly away over the moor like a wraith of evening mist.

"I'm going down there to look around. It used to be an old haunt of mine long ago—all this place round about here," the big engineer said, smiling as he vanished over the edge.

He found nothing for his pains, however. From a jutting scarp of rock that commanded a wide view of the cove he saw only a precipitous beach of harsh broken shingles, and dark upreared boulders among which the angry waters foamed. The twilight had grown so dim that the boulders looked like sentinels who had paused in their tracks to watch and listen for a sound out of the sea.

"There isn't a sign of anything unusual. Jan was probably engaged in some private little mischief of his own after all," Todhunter said, emerging.

"Probably. He's a wise little beggar, for all his handicaps. Make haste if you're coming, Tod; this beast of mine won't stand. He objects to the vicinity for some reason."

Todhunter returned, and leaving the spot behind they proceeded down the road for about half a

mile. Now at intervals could be heard sweeping down the coast line a long low sound, almost like the cry of some great creature in distress. Varying in intensity with the veer of the wind, it rose at times to a hoarse reverberating bellow that filled the quiet night, and again fell away to a remote hollow muttering, scarcely noticeable. At that hour, in that lonely place, the sound was inexpressibly wild and fraught with mystery. It was the cry of the Puffing Hole, within which angry waters were contending as in a great bottle, and forcing the air upward through the narrow vent. It was always so after severe storms.

Underneath this sound came another, growing steadily louder and nearer—the rhythmical beat of horses' feet and the rumble of carriage wheels. Eyes accustomed to gazing through twilight distance presently discerned a dim shape upon the road some little way off. These were travelers returning from Treddlestone, the nearest railroad terminus.

The three gentlemen, one on horseback and two on foot, dropped into single file by the roadside to allow the carriage to pass, also to exchange friendly

greetings with its occupants. As the vehicle came abreast, however, they perceived only strangers—three ladies, two of whom were young and one beautiful. The clergyman, following the courteous custom of the countryside, bared his head; and the two younger men did likewise in a silence as respectful as his, but tinged faintly with the curiosity of their years. One of the ladies bowed. It was the beautiful one; and the tall engineer felt her eyes light upon him and was conscious that she had smiled faintly as she swept past.

The two parties had passed out of earshot of each other in a moment.

"Three ladies," Mr. Morrison said in an undertone. "Luke, I've an idea those may be our friends."

"Hardly. They're not due before to-morrow. These must be going further down to Minoton. Awfully pretty girl, old Tod—that one who bowed to you. Never took the least notice of me."

To this that large and ugly chief engineer replied in his gentle voice. "You're a conceited youth. Why should she notice you? You're going to Lon-

don. It's just as well for your business there, Lothario, that she didn't."

"Very well. Some day though, when I'm dead or married, you'll be sorry to think of all the unkind things you've said about me. I must be off, or I'll miss the night train. *Au revoir!* Good uncle, have a care of the lad while I'm gone."

At this the gay cavalier shook the reins upon his charger's neck and vanished into the night toward Treddlestone; and his friends retraced their way across the starlit heath to Staley Crags.

Night had blotted out the last low streak of light from the horizon. Darkness had drawn a soft, scented pall across the moor's face, and had hidden from each other the humans who were abroad on it. But in the sounds and perfumes of the moor's unseen life, in the slippery elastic turf and the breeze wandering lightly off the sea, was nothing melancholy. At times, however, the wind carried that mournful cry down the coast, and perhaps the two men listened unconsciously, for they had grown thoughtful. One presently began to think aloud.

"The enemy of Cornwall, Tod. The sea is swal-

lowing her by inches. One day it will take her back, root and branch. A few sunken reefs on the charts of the seas hereabouts will tell the tale of where we have been; and future geographical societies will issue maps with dotted lines to show the supposed site of ancient Cornwall. By and by even that will be forgotten, and we shall be deep sea bottom as in the beginning. The sea knows we are upstarts. The Puffing Hole is a process."

"By the way," said Todhunter, "I met Trenwyth to-night. He says Great Trevanny struck sea-water to-day in the new Lode. Did you hear?"

"No. How so, Tod? I thought you were a long way inland."

"We are. A full half mile to the east of here—over that way! I can't explain it yet. Trenwyth says it was undoubtedly sea water, however—and a large body of it."

"But what's to be done, Tod? Could he check it?"

"Oh, yes, for the time. What we'd like to learn is how it came there. I haven't found any solution

that satisfies me as yet. I'm going down there the first thing in the morning."

Down the wind at that moment came the Puffing Hole's great sinister "sough," in which it almost seemed that a new singular note of triumph mingled. "Todhunter, have you thought of that?" the elder man asked.

"Yes."

"Has the place ever been thoroughly explored, as far as you know?"

"No, never seriously. I suppose Luke and I went in that day long ago as far as anyone ever went. The tides make it so dangerous."

"It may penetrate some distance inland, however?

"Yes—a long way, I think." Then a silence fell between them which lasted till Mr. Morrison broke it.

"Tod, boy—if anything of that sort were to happen, it would be the ruin of Staley Crags."

Todhunter's voice was grave, as was habitual with him. "I'll know by morning where the water comes from, and what the danger is," he said in his quiet manner.

They had come to the edge of the uplands overlooking the valley, spangled here and there with lights. Presently they parted. Mr. Morrison entered his garden, and Todhunter, leading his horse, took his way along the hillside to his own house.

CHAPTER VIII.

ODD FISHERMEN.

All night long his light gleamed above the sleeping village. If he had known how an unimportant, deaf and dumb scrap of humanity, lying awake in a shanty called "home," watched it, he would have smiled and grown pitiful. For all such shy, helpless creatures as Jan his heart held a large and old-time kindness.

Jan connected the light with that meeting on the moor, and watched with eyes fearful and suspicious; but it was not that alone which kept him awake. His small white face wore an air of uncanny wisdom; for knowledge came to him through channels unknown to common folk. While he speculated fearfully on the relation of the light to himself he was intently waiting, with that sense which in him supplied the sense of hearing, for something else.

A mystery was on foot. The latest inmate of the shanty, a lodger who hired a bed below stairs,

had not yet come home; and Jan had reason of his own, since the evening's adventure, for strong curiosity as to what would follow when the man should finally appear.

Meantime in the lonely little cove up the coast where Jan had first appeared was considerable activity. The lodger and a friend of his were there, engaged upon a happy and profitable enterprise. "Fishin' "—the lodger hilariously termed it. His friend laughed at the joke, for the "catch" these two fishermen had taken had made them merry, and a little drunk.

In old times the men of Cornwall had been wreckers, wilfully drawing vessels to disaster on their wild coasts; but in these humane and civilized days Cornishmen would scorn to do such things. No life-savers are braver or more daring. Only—as the lodger sagely observed—"when the sea brings good brandy to a man's door he surely wor a fool if he let it go by," knowing very well that his neighbor would not repeat the mistake.

It was this pleasant business which Jan had accidentally discovered and come within an inch of betraying. The fishermen were not so drunk then,

however; and knowing that Government would claim their "catch" if they were detected had had sense enough to keep quiet until the danger was past. Then they had crept out from the shadow of the dark boulders and resumed their task.

"Young Master Lyttle," the lodger said piously, "he'm a son of Belial for a poor man to meddle with."

"Surely, they's two of en. The other's worse. He'm Satan. 'Tis the mercy of God 'twor so dark as they couldn't see."

It was Pike, the ancient enemy of small boys, who spoke. He still had a genius for turning over money by easy methods. When opportunities to do this failed him, Pike worked; but this was seldom.

Near midnight, having secreted a part of their treasure, they hauled the rest with uncertain but good intent up to the moor, and there paused to refresh themselves again. While the lonely wash of billows boomed upward through the night, Corin, the lodger, looked out to seaward sentimentally.

"Here's to they poor dead chaps a-ridin' out there, so drownded an' cold. A man should be

sorry to think of en. But seein' as they'll never put cup to lip no more they couldn't 'a done better'n send the liquor to us. We'm greatly obliged I'm sure—ain't that so, Pike?"

Pike did not like the subject, and gruffly said so. Tales of the countryside told of dead seamen who had sometimes come to land after their goods. Pike was the mellower fisherman of the two, but the hour was close upon midnight, and he said that he thought they ought to be getting a little nearer to Staley Crags. So they shouldered their burdens and struck a little inland.

As the voice of the sea grew gently remote Pike's hilarity returned. He was always a genial companion in an adventure like this. He stood still impressively and rather suddenly.

"'Tis wonderful how happy I be, Corin. Seems as if barrel here wor nothen' but air—just air. An' 't is heavy barrel too."

"'Tis said as spirits be nothen' but air, anyway," Corin chuckled facetiously; "an' as for heavy —if a chap's spirits be light, how can they be heavy too?"

Pike chortled and began carefully to lower his

barrel. "You'm a real clever chap, Corin. Blest if I won't make en a bit lighter yet. 'Tis comical now, ain't it?"

"What is?" asked Corin disapprovingly.

"Why this—that good liquor should lose its heft when it goes inside of a man. 'Tis a shame to make a labor of it. Let's drink en all up now, Corin. Won't be no more to carry."

"No. Come on now, you'm gettin' drunk," said Corin severely. "You must think of all the money there'll be. Why, us won't have to work no more for a year."

"Won't work no more—ever," reiterated Pike. "Just live—'n drink. Nothen' else. Nice old woman, the sea. Never tells! Brings things to a man 'n says, 'Here y' are, my son,'—'n then just keeps on smilin' 'n noddin' her head, 'n talkin' to herself. Ve-ry nice old person." Pike blew a gallant, rummy kiss to the westward and heaved the cask up uncertainly till it came to position, and the two tramped on.

"Us'll put en in mine," said Corin. "'Tis a fine safe place for en. An' tomorrow night us'll go back an' get the rest. Gauger 'll never put hands

on en once they's down Great Trevanny; an' honest men 'll have a chance to make some money. Keep mum, Pike. Trevanny lads like brandy;—us'll have money to burn."

Pike swore his loudest that he would be mum. He felt a great necessity for a noise of some kind, to dispel the very spirit of midnight that seemed suddenly to have fallen about them. There was no moon, but the night was clear, and the stars shed a faint, unreal visibility, not to be named light, upon a silent, unreal world. Familiar objects grew upon one suddenly in unexpected proximity, and took vague threatening shapes like evil spirits masquerading in the guise of honest things of daylight. Above stretched the dark nightly heaven, sowed with gleaming stars; below—the sea and the waste of land filled with shadows, inscrutable, brooding.

The two, partly sobered by the solemnity, were half way to the valley when they were aware of a still figure standing directly in their path. It seemed less a man than a motionless rock, yet a man it certainly was; but so fixed and sinister in

aspect and so silent that the two involuntarily stopped.

The hour and scene invested it with the unreality of those figures that suddenly appear in dreams and hold us spellbound by some awful fascination of terror. Not a word was spoken, but a passing breeze stirred and lifted the stranger's hair, which seemed long and faintly white. With a sudden movement he made a short step forward, and raising his right hand pointed straight at Pike. That brave fisherman was so startled that he sprang incontinently backward and dropped his keg with a crash.

The stranger did not pursue. It was the old preacher. He did not know exactly what these two were about, but they had all the air of thieves. Shaking his tall white head angrily, till his hair spread out around it in all directions in a shower, he cried accusingly, "Long ago it was said that the wicked flee when no man pursueth."

Corin had stood his ground, and Pike returned swearing to pick up his brandy keg. Even to their muddled brains it was clear that here was nothing supernatural. They were angry because they had

been so panic-stricken; and besides it was plain that this old man would interfere with their plans.

They took the simplest way to prevent it. They rushed upon him together, greatly surprised at first at the resistance they met. The old man was strong, but the little brandy kegs made heavy weapons. Being younger men, and brutish, the pair soon left the preacher half dead upon the moor, and seizing their booty disappeared into the midnight with it.

They made no stop when they came to Jan's house, where Corin lodged. Since news of their treasure had already got wind, they decided to bestow it in a safe place at once. So they passed on to where the sullen red eye of the mine shaft dominated all that side of the glen.

Behind them, all unseen, came Jan, thrilled by his own daring, but loyal. It was for this he had kept himself awake. He was not a spy. He knew only that the sea had brought great good luck to the lodger, and he was determined to see the end of it.

It had been an unexpectedly fruitful night's work for Pike and Corin, and its results would have surprised even themselves could they have

foreseen them. Todhunter began early to come upon the traces of it.

Immersed in his papers while the night beyond the low eastern hills was growing pale, he had once or twice raised his head as if to listen to a sound that escaped him. At the third time he rose and passing quietly from the house stood bare-headed and silent against the dim hillside.

Faintly, as if from a great distance, a cry was wafted down hill. A stranger would have been at a loss to say whence the sound came; but he knew it was from the moor, and went up swiftly.

The air was stirring to the first faint impulses of the dawn, but the great plain lay dark and indistinct as yet. He who knew the moors so well had not searched many minutes before he came upon the preacher's body, lying inert in the long dew-wet growths; and with superb strength raised it and bore it down the hillside to his house. The old man revived before long. His talk was wild, and the engineer in his own quiet, strong, gentle fashion bound the wound and carried him to a bed, meaning to investigate in the morning. But when

he entered the room some few hours later the preacher was gone.

* * * * * * * *

It was still very early; but the voice of the man engine in Great Trevanney's shaft was calling steadily up and down the valley, and the miners were turning out in knots.

The man engine was a feature brought in by the new regime and its progressive-minded chief. Formerly, of a morning, men had gone down into the deeps on ladders, and of an evening had climbed out, white and exhausted, by the same way—and died early. The advance was a humane and merciful one, but it had some unavoidable objections.

It was a huge vertical beam, suspended in the shaft, and provided down its length with many tiny platforms, two fathoms apart, and just large enough to hold a man. When the beam was stationary these platforms were exactly level with similar ones fixed in the shaft wall. The business of the beam was to move ceaselessly up and down the shaft—two fathoms one way, two fathoms the other. Under no circumstances could it travel further than

this. And at each stage it paused for a second or two before returning.

When a man wished to go down he stepped on the upper platform at the surface, and was immediately lowered two fathoms—or twelve feet. While the beam made its momentary halt he changed—very quickly—to the stationary step in the wall. The beam at once started upwards, bringing its second step to his feet. Promptly he took his place upon it and was lowered another stage, where he must change again while the beam rose, so bringing a still lower platform level with his. Every time the beam dropped he was upon it, and dropped with it. Every time it rose he stood on the fixed platform in the wall and waited. Men going up to the surface merely took the reverse movement of the beam, and were raised instead of lowered.

The worst fault of the man engine was that it was a machine. It knew nothing except its business —to rise and fall; and if a man's head and shoulders by any mishap came in the way of its grinding platforms, it simply removed them and said nothing about it. Afterwards his fellows who were

making the journey with him might discover it, perhaps.

The beam did its business with the faithfulness of Fate. At each journey it brought a man to a platform. Though by sickness or forgetfulness or some other mischance he might remain there, at the next stage it brought another; and there was only room on the tiny platform for one.

Even with these disadvantages, however, the man engine was regarded as a great and beneficent advance on the ladders.

Corin and Pike had not descended by the man-engine. They were down in the New Lode, that dim, imperilled, shadowy section of Great Trevanny whose workings were fantastic and high; and where great fissures, the record of past upheavals, had rent the earth and blazed a way for humans to follow in. Holes and pits for the purpose of the pair were here in plenty; but they had had trouble in agreeing upon a hiding place, and this had caused delay.

Then, in an unfortunate moment for himself, they had discovered Jan.

How he had swarmed after them down the lad-

ders he might have told, perhaps, if he could. There he was, however; and they knew his purpose as well as he knew theirs. They were in the act of teaching him the folly of his daring when Todhunter, coming through that part of the mine to inspect the leaking roof, discovered them all three.

One of those silent marshalled forces of the underworld—a splash of water from the roof—had fallen upon the candle on his head, and completely obliterated him for the moment. It was while he stood invisible, feeling for a match, that he had heard close at hand a cry, subdued and faint, but full of supplication and terror. He knew deviltry of some kind was afoot, and went forward instantly without relighting.

To the left of the passage, which widened out suddenly on either side, lay one of those deep, dark fissures of the earth, which no man had borne hand in the making of. On the farther side uprose a sheer wall of rock, down whose face a thin white cascade of water leaped and vanished. An iron ladder rose from a bridge of planking, and, hug-

ging the wet cliff, mounted indefinitely upward till it was lost.

On the pit's brink stood Corin and Pike, amusing themselves, all unaware of the tall silent figure behind. He could not discover what they were about, till suddenly a dark wooden crutch spun from the bank, dropping with a faint receding clatter down the abyss, and a child's body suspended by the wrists shot out twice across the chasm. Todhunter recognized the body by its pitiful single foot.

They had called him Satan, and very likely he had given them reason previous to this. He was ugly and swift and magnificent enough in his anger. They were only children themselves in his hands. Jan crept out through the tangle of feet. The lights flickered feebly on the black shadows of the pit—on the whispering water sliding down, down. "Now you beasts," said a gentle unhurried voice, "I'm going to teach you a lesson."

His hands were closed on their dark veiny throats, and slowly he forced them backward to the brink. Their blows beat frantically on his iron muscles as with deliberate and fearful strength he raised them, one after the other, till their heels

swung clear of the edge, and shook them, gasping and choking and purple, as they had shaken little Jan. The latter crouched against the wall and watched in wide-eyed terror. Corin's hat, with its torch attached, fell off in his struggles and fluttered down into the shadows. For fear that Pike's might follow and leave them in total darkness, Todhunter shook that worthy, when his turn came, rather more carefully. Then he set them down that they might breathe.

"Now you've tried it I don't suppose you want any more," he observed in a gentle inquiry filled somehow with uncomfortable and deadly reservations.

Pike, in his fear of this terrible creature who would murder him with soft words, wept drunkenly. Corin gasped something that meant "enough."

"You're both drunk," said Todhunter. "I'll save Government the trouble of confiscating these little barrels of yours. You know we don't allow this stuff in here." He cruelly spun the little kegs over the edge with his foot. Pike's tears flowed anew at the sight, and Corin said something under

his breath; but the engineer, if he heard, disdained to note.

"Now we'll go. Precede me up the ladder, both of you, and remember if you fall I can't catch you. There'll be work for us all up there, I fancy, by the aspect of things. You first, Pike—up you go! Now Corin!"

While the doughty pair picked their way across the plank and swarmed solemnly up the iron ladder, Jan crept from the wall to his mighty rescuer's side and stood there timidly on his one foot. Todhunter had almost forgotten him. Now he looked down kindly.

"Hello, little Jan. We gave them a lesson, didn't we? The big rascals, to hurt a poor little devil like you."

Jan emitted a jumble of inarticulate sounds that meant gratitude and intense admiration. The rescuer smiled down kindly and seemed to understand.

"They lost your crutch down there too—. Never mind, we'll get you another in a day or two." Todhunter hurriedly bestowed on the child two new candles from the bunch at his own belt, for Jan had no light; then with a friendly nod he strode

hastily out upon the bridge and vanished up the face of the rock after the two disgruntled fishermen.

That day Pike and Corin worked.

CHAPTER IX.

THE AWAKENING.

Soon, while the long bright day shone above ground, the village in the valley learned what was being done underneath its feet. The sea is soon or late the end of too many mines in that country. All day long relief gangs descended, and the miners below came to the surface for rest and food and dry clothing, and to tell the news to the anxious people. The chief engineer alone did not appear. With him the greater part of the day was Mr. Lyttle the elder, perhaps in place of his son, who would inevitably have been there if he had not been in London.

The danger was to be averted for this time, however. By evening the roof had been closed and patched and shored up into temporary strength. When the man engine clanked the last party to the top it brought also the engineer.

The sun was almost gone. It was no carpet

knight who, mudstained and weary, stepped out into the red sunset world and turned rapidly to the eastward. His attention, however, was presently altogether occupied by a novel spectacle that appeared a little way in front along the hillside.

Part of it he had seen many a time before. This was a matronly cow which, returning from the pasture of an evening, invariably chose one little spot where the narrow path grew narrowest, to lie down and reflect. There she was now, her brown contemplative eyes watching him as benevolently as though he had never routed her out of this very spot.

But behind her, amused, provoked, and faintly afraid, the lady of the carriage stood in the sunset and regarded him also, down the long line of the animal's back and between her horns. As the eyes of man and maid met there suddenly crept into each a smile.

Not a word passed. Todhunter's duty in the case was plain. The steady gray eyes, which were his only approach to beauty, deferred to the girl's, but said eagerly all the time, "I know you; I know you." This did not for an instant delay the rude

hint he gave the trusting animal between, who lumbered up indignantly and went off with switching tail. The girl extended her hand to him, laughing.

"A thousand thanks for the gallant rescue. Oh, Tod—I knew you on the instant."

For that matter it was impossible to mistake him had she stopped to think of it. His bared dark head looked wondrously tall; and as he took her hand and bent over it smiling, his greeting told of the old friendship and the long years that lay between. "It *was* you—last night then."

"Of course. Did anyone dispute it? Admit that you didn't recognize me."

"The light on the moor is so deceptive at that hour," he pleaded in excuse. But she laughed.

"Not to me. I knew you at once. The gentleman on horseback was of course Luke."

"Yes; he was setting off for London. He went the next moment."

She was a very beautiful girl, but such homage as his grave eyes paid her queen had never received before. Now she withdrew her hand quietly, her cheeks borrowing from the crimson of the sunset; and, seeing it, his heart began to charge riotously.

Her voice was most silvery and sweet. "Why, Tod—it's over ten years, isn't it? We're most improper really. We ought to have waited till we'd been introduced."

He laughed, for he knew she had recollected the introduction of that long past first meeting of theirs. Then he looked down upon himself, and feeling the need of apology, made one.

"If it hadn't been for that cow I shouldn't have dared to speak to you in this state. When I'm properly clothed and in my right mind may I come up this evening and be properly introduced, Miss Dunham?"

"Oh yes, of course. But I'm not going any further at present," she explained, hurriedly. "You see, I might meet some more cows. If you don't mind I'll walk back with you."

So they turned upward together. It is not certain that Jessie was afraid of further cows.

As for him, he thought her not much changed from the days when he had first known her. Her hair, darker by a shade or two, still had the golden gleam of corn waving in the sun; and her eyes, which the years had deepened, were as blue and

clear as in old days. From these glimpses he had seen, the deepening had only made them the sweeter and more lovely. But while he was thinking of these things she said something which disconcerted him.

"How one grows old, Tod. Last time—I wore my hair down my back, and you were about two feet shorter. To-day—do you know what Mrs. Lyttle said? She said you were a hero, and that they owed Great Trevanny to you."

She looked up swiftly as she spoke and saw him growing a darker red under his tan. He said disconcertedly, "Fudge;" then glanced into her beautiful blue eyes and took courage. "If a man has to choose between being a hero or a dunce every time, he's in a bad predicament, Miss Dunham."

"Most painful. He has my sympathies more than ever," she declared swiftly; at which they smiled on one another as old friends who may pay absurd compliments if they choose, and he asked her if she remembered the Puffing Hole.

She remembered it. Then he told her briefly how the sea had eaten a passage by that old waterway into the mine, and how the problem henceforth

would be to keep it out. She had heard about it already that day, from many sources.

"What would happen if it came, Tod? Would it come in a great sudden flood?" asked Jessie.

It was what they had feared, he said, though he did not think it would happen now. It would be a great calamity to the valley. The mine would be lost at least, perhaps many lives and much other property also. He did not think it would happen.

While he talked she had given him her hand that he might help her over a low stone wall. The feeling that passed from his hand to hers was one of such great, safe strength, it seemed that he could have lifted her up bodily with that one hand if he had wished. His great gentleness, and the pleasant sense of security his presence gave, tempted her to presume a little. Her eyes looked sweetly and venturesomely on him.

"I'm going down Great Trevanny to-morrow. Ruth and I will make a tour of inspection—that's the term, isn't it? Tod, would you let us come down?" But the answer was prompt and unexpected.

"No, I think it would be inadvisable at present."

"Goodness! What a Great Mogul you are in your own line. Doubtless,"—again she looked venturesome—"doubtless Luke will consent to take us when he comes."

"You might try him," he replied. He was smiling, and his implied confidence in the result nettled her. She wondered for an instant whether she was going to like this new Todhunter, but decided finally that she was.

"I'd never have believed you would grow up into such a martinet," she averred. "I think Luke must be the nicer after all;" then, with much sarcastic meekness, "Have mother and I your kind permission to live on the outside of the earth hereabouts? We inadvertently omitted to ask you before."

This time Todhunter's answer was much less prompt. He hesitated just long enough to make her wait for it. "When I was two feet shorter," said he, "you did not ask me such questions as that. You knew better—much better."

Jessie turned rather hastily and saw Ruth approaching.

"Here comes Ruth—Miss Ruth Hardy—whom you are to know very well, Tod. She is my most

particular friend. I'm going to present you."

He had not time to grow embarrassed. He looked like any laborer in the battered mining suit which earth and sea water had worked their will on, and he knew it. That to which he attached no weight at all was the beautiful physique, the handsome suppleness and vigor and ease of his perfectly proportioned body, not to be misrepresented by mere clothes. Had he known it, Miss Hardy thought him not so ugly as had been told her. He, ungrateful, was thinking her a passably pretty girl with honest gray eyes, and concluding in his heart that any woman's beauty must suffer if placed beside Jessie Dunham's. Presently, with a smiling adieu, he departed. Of late years he had been so busy with ambitions and business that he had not thought much about Jessie; but now it appeared that there had been no woman in the universe beside her.

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He looked much more respectable and conventional later in the evening when he went to call on Mrs. Dunham, and awoke that lady to lively reminiscences. A peculiarity of his society since he

had become a man was that those who spent a little time in it found themselves regarding his misfortune with respect rather than pity, and with a strong feeling of partisanship. Mrs. Dunham expressed her sentiments to Mrs. Lyttle that evening in a quiet moment.

"My dear, the man is more extraordinary than the boy used to be. Actually when he talks to me I cannot divest myself of the idea that there is something handsome about him somewhere, even though I'm looking straight at him. How does he manage it, do you think?"

Mrs. Lyttle only smiled. "He is just Tod, Dora, and a dear fellow. As Luke says, 'There is no other explanation.'"

In the Lyttle's house, where his standing was almost as Luke's own, he was most at his ease; and this evening had devoted himself to the pleasant vanity of making a good impression in that quarter where he most desired to make it. He was more deeply concerned than he need have been about his appearance in the afternoon. This was a sign that his love malady was properly progressive.

Jessie in a pure white dress, with scarlet and

purple fuchsias and dark green foliage knotted at her breast, would have made even Apollo look to the curling of his hair. Ruth sat much apart and observed. About nine o'clock, late hours for Staley Crags, Mr. Lyttle dragged the visitor away to further details connected with the day's incident in the mine.

But at midnight, when Todhunter stood alone at the threshold of his house, the hour of his awakening had come.

In that beneficent night stillness, when only the restless waves talked, and heaven's myriad eyes looked down in pity on men's sins and sad mistakes, Todhunter's sanity came back, clear-eyed and cold. Of what folly had he been guilty this day? Since when had women begun to tolerate the idea of love from such as he? This one, whose beauty might have enamored a prince, had met him with the sweet affection of her childhood, and he in return had demanded in his heart her woman's love. He was a rash, simple fool who did not know his own inexorable limitations.

Never till to-day had he harbored the longing for a woman's love; but at the thought of hers his

heart, dead and black and coffined as it was to-night, leaped in pain and desire. She had never conceived of him as her lover. Some deadly certainty raised its head and whispered that she never would. None the less he loved her and worshiped her, and knew that he was condemned to keep on loving her for ever.

As he stood there sombre-eyed, filled with bitter stern reproaches on his too tender folly, a faint rustle stirred among the bushes. Some little animal, he thought, but took no further note of it. In a moment something touched his hand very softly, and looking down he found a small shadow standing there, clasping his hand and peering mutely upward into the dim height of his face.

"Why," he whispered with accustomed kindness, "it's Jan, poor little Jan. What does he want, I wonder?"

For reply the boy pressed the strong hand against his cheek, crying plaintively a cry of thanks and pleasure. He was supporting himself by a rotten twig in his left hand, and it was plain that he desired nothing more than the company of his saviour.

Todhunter bent down and swung the boy up to the top of a mossy stone gate post that had once given entrance to an old garden. There perched, Jan's small white face was on a level with his own, and the two communed thus in perfect silence, as friends have the right to do. To Jan the touch of the engineer's hand was sufficient; and he never guessed at the message that his weak little fingers were conveying in return. He was a spirit of hope and love come down through the evening with a message of help to his friend. The hour made all things fantastic; and watching the still dim face, so devoted and silent, the man almost believed that life had grown brighter and warmer; and love itself appeared not so far off as before.

"Little Jan," he said at last very gently, "I have read your message. I will not sit down weakly and relinquish my goal at the start. Hope is for every man, and I will hope and strive to attain my desire as a man should." He broke off, laughing under his breath at the fearful sweetness of the hope. "Little lad, to-morrow we will buy you a new crutch."

Jan did not understand; but he saw that his friend spoke, and some subtle sense detected happiness. This was very satisfactory, and he smiled through the darkness, while Todhunter, broken loose, poured a storm of passion and hope into those safe little ears that heard not.

"Jan, do you know her? She is so lovely—lovelier than the stars up there. When the sun shines on the sea at midday—that is her eyes; and her hair is like dusky gold gleaming in the shadows. She is a flower. She is a queen of love—and I have dared to carry her in my heart for sixteen years. Closer lad, but do not listen. I kissed her once—on her little pink hand like a sea-shell—when I was a little lad like you and did not understand. But now we are men. We must not do such things—oh never. That is—unless—" He stopped, laughed, and abruptly tossed Jan upward to his shoulder in triumph. "When you're a man, Jan, you'll understand the prohibition exactly. It is late, little spirit, and I must carry you down to bed. And to-morrow I will surely buy you a fine new crutch, because you love me."

Riding upon the chief engineer's shoulder Jan went down the valley like a king.

Then the gorge slept, save only for the watchers in the endangered mine.

CHAPTER X.

SMALL BEGINNINGS.

Business called Todhunter away frequently, and there were days when he was not seen about the village. He did not figure in the nightly circle at Mr. Lyttle's house, where it was plain that his absence made a gap. Mrs. Lyttle explained that with Luke away, and Todhunter also, the house was inclined to be dull; she took her visitors down to the sea road, where the western ocean lay harmless and mighty under the summer day; and to the mouth of the pit, into which Jessie had desired Todhunter to take her. Mrs. Lyttle explained the two modes of descent, and as one of the group in white summer dress looked on the strong heavy machinery slipping for ever up and down—up and down—the volumes of water leaping forth from the vast pumps, the thought of descending grew suddenly distasteful. Ruth Hardy only laughed. "Todhunter would be with you, you know," she

said. She found Jessie's quick change of mind very amusing.

If a troublesome matter cropped up on one of those days Mr. Lyttle was wont to say easily, "Leave it. Tod will be here tomorrow or next day; he'll see to it." Jessie stored up these things in her heart. It is gratifying to hear a friend valued; and that old friendship with Todhunter was pleasant to remember, and a little dear. So she listened, but seldom referred to the absent one herself; and as a guest was most agreeable and lovely and lovable, but a little haughty toward Ruth when they were alone together.

Ruth was not affected. One day she came with a queer little smile on her face. Jessie was constrained to ask the reason.

"There seems no end to the things your friend Tod knows about. He's an expert in crutches, too," said Ruth.

"Crutches?"

"Yes. Was he ever lame, Jessie?"

"Todhunter lame? Of course not. What do you mean?"

"Nothing. I just met him a few minutes ago.

If he hasn't been lame quite recently he allows himself to talk in riddles to women, which is scarcely polite of him. Do you see that queer dirty little boy up there?"

"Yes." Above them in the bright sunshine Jan stood outlined. He was certainly dirty, and his young face was eager and absorbed. In his hand, poised gloriously as though it had been a spear, was a shining yellow crutch; which he turned and thrust about that the sunlight might flash on the varnish of it.

"Todhunter just brought it," explained Ruth. "I came on the two of them quite unexpectedly as he was in the act of giving it to the child. He told me, with a perfectly solemn face, that he was paying his debts; he said Jan had given him a crutch not many days ago, and he was bound to return the civility. What did that mean, Jessie?"

"How should I know? He is Todhunter of the old days; he hasn't outgrown himself," said Jessie, laughing. Ruth exploded in a whisper, "If you care for my opinion he is a *dear* fine fellow, and you don't know it."

"Don't I? Haven't I always said so? You don't understand," said Jessie.

Later in the day she saw the ragged boy again, and turned out of her way on purpose to talk to him; but discovered that he was deaf and dumb.

As for Todhunter himself—very soon after this he took a bolder step in his wooing, though whether it was a step forward or a step backward he could not have said.

It was very early in the morning, when the sun was barely risen, and the long black shadows still lay prone on the earth. The engineer had already been down the mine before daylight. Down in the lowest levels of the valley, beside the pool where the brown waterway lay hushed for a while—where he and Luke used to go fishing in the old days—he espied the lady of his dreams by the sunlight shining on her hair. Bareheaded, and quiet as a spirit, she had come out alone while the world lay asleep, in a kind of greed for beauty. But at the moment he came upon her she was thinking, if he had guessed it, of him.

She had well enough discerned symptoms of the lover in him by this time. It was faintly surprising,

and yet more delicately agreeable to her than the incense of any other had been; but her mind was not in the least altered about him. And after all, why should it be so surprising? Was he not Todhunter—the same devoted admirer as of old—who had never presumed and never would? It was fitting that he should still admire, and most agreeable. Considering all this it was strange how much she thought of him.

Strange, too, the heat that flashed across her face as she turned, suddenly discovering him near. There was about his contained quiet figure, as he stood overlooking her with the shadow of a smile on his face, a real beauty, of the kind that belongs to strong enduring things.

"The best time of day for fishing, Jessie." She had allowed him to call her Jessie.

"I'm not fishing," she said, smiling.

"What then?"

"Just looking." Her eyes took in the pool at their feet, glowing to the sunrise, the distant hills, the long sleepy shadows, the valley's slopes all quiet and rich with silence. His eyes followed.

"I always thought it the best time of day for look-

ing, too," he said presently when they had observed together. "You like it, Jessie?"

"Oh, very much." The slight sigh turned to a smile; her hand made a gesture, "Oh, Tod, I used to dream of Staley Crags in Manchester."

"One thing which has helped to keep it beautiful," he answered, with surprising readiness. He seemed only to be voicing a thing he believed—which lent the compliment delicacy.

She laughed deprecatingly, looking away. Then he saw some swift sweet change come across her eyes; something he could not determine the meaning of; kind, yet chilling to him.

"Talking of dreams—see the rings on the water, how they widen and widen. Do they remind you of anything, I wonder."

"Some old trout down there," he hazarded, with a mild twinkle in his gray eyes, "gobbling up flies for breakfast. I haven't breakfasted yet, Jessie."

"Think of something more fanciful; that is so material," she said, smiling but hesitating; her voice was very soft and sweet. "They remind me a little of childish ideals and dreams. Something happens away back in childhood, Tod—when one is very

young—and the memory of it widens and widens over one's life. But at last the shore of manhood and womanhood is reached. The poor ripple is broken. One has grown up, and laughs at the foolish old dream."

A little eloquent pause fell between them, while the red glow on the water rose into her cheeks. Her eyes, turning to him, were full of the old friendship; and Todhunter understood that the childhood and the dream were his, nor hers; she would have him dismiss the dream. Recklessly he vowed, all his heart filled with the vision of her.

"That shore where the old memory ceases, and the ripple breaks, is not manhood, Jessie. Far from it. It may be death perhaps—nothing sooner; for until then the dream will not end. What difference does it make? The ripple obeys the law that gave it life; so does the boy's dream. And both are happy at least."

Well pleased perhaps at his stubbornness, she laughed suddenly. "Oh, the responsibility of the trout to start all the ripples!"

"Don't push a trout into sentiment. He's after flies—nothing more."

Smiling himself, the bold wooer picked up her hat and walked with her to Mr. Lyttle's, very well the master of his retreat. He seemed indeed the victor rather than herself; and so unconsciously deceitful is the best meaning heart of woman that Jessie was actually pleased.

But the valley men found the chief engineer distraught that day. Traitorous doubt was busy, letting down the bars of his stronghold of hope for black fear to enter.

CHAPTER XI.

THROUGH THE MIST.

"What are you going to do, Jessie?"

Ruth had wondered about it for some time before she asked. It was somnolent afternoon, the heavens were warm and bright, and earth was lazy. Jessie seemed to have been moving indolently about the room for a long time.

"I'm going out. I've been here nearly two weeks, and I've done nothing yet but trot up and down hill on those crooked little paths. I'm going up on the moor." Jessie laid a scarf of shimmering red silk, dotted with little black spots like seeds, against her white skin, and mentally decided that it would do; then changed her mind altogether and laid it down again.

"You'll be too warm in this sun. If you'll wait till it's a bit cooler I'd like to come, too."

"Come now," was the answer in indolent sweet

temper. "They say there's always a breeze up there. I'm going now, anyway."

"You'll get lost, Jessie,—and I've read somewhere that there are wild cattle on these moors, and they'll attack you. Or you'll fall down some old hole or something, and won't be able to get out again."

"In that case I'll wait till Ruth Hardy comes and pulls me out. Where on earth is my hat, Ruthie? have you seen it?"

Ruthie said she had seen it last on the porch downstairs. Then as the door was closing she said something else.

"If you've wanted to go up there so desperately why haven't you asked Todhunter? You knew he'd be perfectly delighted."

Jessie's delicate mouth expressed severe displeasure for the instant that it was in view. She did not deign to reply. Ruth was a Philistine, and there was no use in explaining. Todhunter himself understood the position perfectly and had accepted it; to drag his name into discussions of this sort offended Jessie's aristocratic sense.

She took her ruffled feelings up to the moor, and

there presently lost them and grew lovable and sweet tempered again.

There are days when the moors are all sad and monotonous and gray—when the hills, rimmed in purple or shrouded in mist, and the endless murmur of winds, waves and grasses, seem to be telling some tale of mystery and melancholy. But to-day the spirit of summer was abroad on them. The air quivered under the burden of the sunshine. In the distance sheep were browsing so quietly that they looked like gray boulders; and Jessie laughed, recalling Ruth's superstitions about fierce wild cattle.

Not a human soul stirred on the wide green undulating expanse. The indented coast line, ragged and wave-washed, stretched northward till the blue distance dimmed and softened it. She followed it until she grew weary, and turning inland, struck across the heath toward the hills.

Here was no sign that human feet had ever preceded her. Little wild flowers opened tiny eyes at her as she passed, as though wondering to see her there; and she turned aside for love of them lest they should be bruised and regret that she had come. The breeze blew from behind her, whipping strands

of her hair round her face, and drumming musically across the orifices of her ears. She took off her hat that the wind might blow all over her head, and gathering a spray of heather, brushed its hundred bells across her face while she sang softly to herself an old love song.

"Oh, my love's like a red red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
Oh, my love's like a melody
That's sweetly played in tune."

Led by the enchantment of loneliness she wandered on and on to places more remote, and presently came to a desolate savage valley looking straight on the west. She stood amid the mementos of the stone age in Cornwall. A tiny village of ancient time huddled under the hillside. The moor had all but overwhelmed it; but some scientist had of late been busy, and one of the little dwellings had been excavated; the stone roof was still in place, grass covered; but the low doorway that gave on the sunlit world looked like the entrance to a vault. Jessie gave up her first venturesome idea of entering.

She strove to feel properly scientific, and to resist the idea that she was in a cemetery. Yet somehow the lonely pathos of the ruins called aloud to her how feeble and lonely a speck she was on this wild stern countryside. The sun, falling lower, mingled her shadow with theirs. She began to reckon how many times before to-day their evening shadows must have lain across the heath. Fear of the great long solitude crept over her. Home was miles away and the sun was setting. Half wistfully she recalled Ruth's taunt concerning Todhunter. It was not of the valley that she had instinctively thought then, but of him.

While she stood there a sound suddenly arose, as faint and all pervasive at first as the rustle of the wind over the grass. Jessie remained like a white monument, half petrified with superstitious fright. Gradually the sound grew; and presently what seemed a human voice burst into a weird chant or singsong. The words were unintelligible, and smacked of something wild and remote, yet their mournful burden could only have been a prayer. So perhaps might the spirit of some old Druid priest

return to chant an evensong over this lonely village of his race.

Just then the sun, dropping to the horizon, sent a long gold ray like a finger across the heath, and straight into the doorway of the stone hut. Just so it must have done on summer evenings a thousand years before. But now it lit up with red fire a pair of dark, keen and watchful eyes, which rested on the girl strangely.

Jessie saw them at the same instant, and also the person to whom they belonged. It was the singer —an ancient looking man who knelt in the doorway with his face toward the sun, supporting himself against the slab wall. After the first glance he took no further cognizance of her presence but continued his plaintive chant. Gradually a strange sense of familiarity crept upon the girl. Somewhere she had seen this old man before, and it might be had once understood what he was saying.

Then the trance that was settling upon her broke; for with a vehement gesture he shook his head, and his thick white hair fell back in a shower on his shoulders. It was only the old Manchester preacher.

In her astonishment and relief she ran to him as though he had been an old friend.

She knew nothing of how he had come there, but she saw instantly how weak and emaciated and delirious he was. One arm hung uselessly in old, blood soaked, dirty coverings; and when in pity she tried to raise it a groan of pain burst from him, and he toppled over weakly against the side of the hut and closed his eyes.

She did not wait to ask him any questions. After all she was the only spirit in the place, a God-sent one, as sweet and womanly as she was lovely and dainty. Laying him compassionately on his back and running to a tiny spring close by she filled her lace and linen hat and brought him as much water as the soaking thing would carry. He did not know that anything was being done for him. He had broken into his wild chant again; and Jessie stood up anxiously and saw that the sun had disappeared over the world's rim. If help was to come before night fell she must leave him there and return to Staley Crags at once.

A mist was rising from the hollows and creeping across the heath's face, wrapping it in obscurity as

the light faded. She was far from the road, among fastnesses of the moor which even tourists seldom visited. If any wanderer in the twilight had espied her, pale and pure and noiseless, flitting around the shoulder of a deserted knoll, he would have waited to make sure whether what he saw was reality or some hurrying phantom. The mist clung about her head, and her bright warm hair lay close and damp on her face. Her eyes were moist and starry, and darkened with anxiety lest the preacher die alone before she could bring help.

The road lay before her at last, but lack of breath made it impossible to run further. The mist was rising thick and gray like a sea, and her feet stumbled often in the slippery uneven grass. She had thought to find help when she reached the road, but it stretched north and south, dim and lonely as the heath, without a sign of life.

Help was on the way, however. Riding express through the dusk toward Treddlestone a horseman had discerned that figure and recognized it for one that had lain in his thoughts for many days. Leaping from his horse he ran swiftly to meet it. What would have been to him incredible in broad

daylight seemed all right in that solemn desolate gloaming. Bareheaded and breathless, with sweet pale face like a spirit's, his love stumbled into his arms. What had brought her there he could not divine; and she, sobbing in weariness and relief against his heart, could not impart for a moment. "Todhunter, I hoped it was you. Oh, you're just the person I wanted most in the world. You must come at once—there's a man dying."

"Yes, dear—where?" Against his will Todhunter's voice shook—and the dream was over. The fearful impropriety of her conduct descended on Jessie with the shock of a thunderbolt. Scandalized, red, and hesitating, she drew aside coldly from his suddenly relaxed arms, and breathless and independent of him told her story as they returned to his horse.

"I know the old fellow," he said. "I picked him up one night, over a week ago; he'd been into trouble then. I thought him a trifle scatterbrained, but perhaps he was only delirious, poor old chap." Then in a low but most formal tone. "Miss Dunham, will you ride with me?"

Jessie, still flustered, but with a dawning smile,

looked on his horse Pawnee, which had come toward them with hanging rein. After all, why should she be angry? No one was to blame but herself. And this was Todhunter, whom she liked better than any man living.

"I never have ridden. Doesn't one occasionally fall off, Tod?"

"Only when they're of no consequence to some one else," was the quick answer. "You will not fall off, Miss Dunham." She laughed as he swung her up, and cried out femininely, "Oh, my!"

Was it the old moor that intoxicated them both in that hour? Jessie strove by speech to ignore their mutual embarrassment, though her heart was beating hard at the memory of how he had held her. Todhunter her lover—and a royal one! Red blood secretly dyed her face. Unawares she had come thus easily and swiftly to the very threshold of love for him! Behind his back she sat like a fair shamed lily, clasping him because she must, and laughing because silence would have been unbearable—striving against that threshold across which the very force of the man was drawing her.

She told the tale of her fright to awake laughter.

"First I thought he was a Druid, Tod; then a Parsee—and the worst was that I knew he must be a ghost in either case."

"He was a Hottentot to frighten you so."

"I think he had his doubts about me, too. He prayed so fast. And the worse he prayed the more dumfounded I was. I'd have been there yet only for his poor ridiculous old umbrella."

"Ridiculous old what?"

"Umbrella. His hair! It is white, and when he shakes it back it flies up exactly like an umbrella. Are there any ghosts on these moors, Tod?"

"I believe there are. I saw one not twenty minutes ago."

She laughed genuinely at his promptness. "I expect I did look like one."

"A ghost is a spirit," said Todhunter. "So is an angel; the Bible says so. My ghost turned out to be one of that kind."

"Oh—! Don't be mendacious, Tod. Pawnee knows better. He could tell you that ghosts of any color aren't so heavy. Turn him a little more to the left, please. I think we're out of the way."

Todhunter did her bidding mechanically. Paw-

nee the swift no longer ran, but swam through seas of mist, out of which the hills now rose dark and near, looking like lost islands. The dimness was all grayness, and the everyday world in which other people lived and worked and loved was gone. For the man all life—all delight—lay in the little hand his covered, in the woman's arm drawn around him. Light replies ran from his lips while he looked down stealthily on it, and swore silent oaths regarding its possession. He would contend against gods and men for it, and relinquish his rights to no man until its own dear white loveliness bade him.

Dim and silent, the stones of the ancient village rose from the heath almost under Pawnee's feet. Todhunter checked the horse, and releasing Jessie's hand was down on his feet in a flash. She came down in his hands with the lightness of a bird, her cheeks petals of the wild rose, her eyes avoiding the depth of the entreaty in his.

"Jessie," whispered Todhunter heavily, as she touched the ground.

She ran from him to the stone hut where her adventure had taken place. He followed quickly, and there they found the old man lying still where

she had left him, but grown more quiet or perhaps weaker. As Todhunter bent above and examined the wounded arm the preacher looked up. For a moment his eyes, wandering strangely over that great physique and over the compassionate slighter one, kindled with passing recognition. Some brief sentence that sounded almost like a warning, he whispered in the unknown tongue.

"Poor old chap," said Todhunter, gently.

"What did he say, Tod?" whispered the girl: but the young man looked slightly disconcerted.

"I am not certain. He has been a great scholar. He spoke in ancient Hebrew." Sharply striking a match he looked about and saw a pile of dry heather, evidently collected for firing. This he bore without and kindled till the flames cast murky light on the strange group within the hut, where he now knelt to examine more carefully the wounded arm. But the keen old eyes had followed all his movements closely, and the preacher spoke again.

"You feign ignorance. I said, "The King show thee His mercy, thou son of strength. Sorrow lieth before thee. When such as thou shalt fall

Some brief sentence that sounded like a warning, he whispered in the unknown tongue.—Page 154

who is there in the earth that shall raise thee and comfort thee?"

The only answer that arose within the hut, where the mist and the flames strove together around Jessie's white bending figure, was the sound of Todhunter's knife, rending the bemired bloody bandages. The preacher lay back, half fainting, his fire gone. Todhunter's face was averted, his head bent somewhat lower. Did he attach a meaning to that strange prescient flash of disordered faculties? Apparently not. High hope and pride and knightly bearing were all that appeared when he looked round with a smile.

"You are not alarmed? He is delirious and half starved, poor wretch. I must fasten this up securely and then we'll try to get him away. Would you mind?"

She held the arm while he searched for a clean portion of the bandage. There was not a wholesome spot. She went outside into the mist and presently returned with some yards of torn white linen, all delicately embroidered along one edge, and handed it to him queenly, without a word. Without a glance or a question he took it, and saying

only "Thank you," bound up the fracture again with firm hands. Then he raised the fainting man in his arms and laid him on Pawnee, who stood snorting without.

Fire and lonely village faded behind them. Again there was only mist—beneath which they walked homeward together beside Pawnee and his burden.

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"So Tod *did* take you after all, didn't he Jessie?"

It was in Jessie's dressing room at night, and Ruth's eyes were reluctantly smiling. But the comb brought down a cloud of shining heavy hair across Jessie's face, and she refused to answer.

CHAPTER XII.

A LEARNED TRAVELER.

Todhunter bestowed the preacher in his own house, over which old Mrs. Bell reigned feebly, as in former years she had reigned over one poorer and smaller, and over him. Also he called in a surgeon who redressed and set the wounded arm which was discovered to be broken.

After that many days passed. Luke did not return. It was a matter of history to his friends that any affairs which took the cavalier to London were apt to prove long and tedious in the transacting.

Engineering business continued to call Todhunter away at intervals to other localities along the coast. In the intervals he saw little of Jessie. He wished to teach her to ride; but whenever in their too brief interviews he had approached that subject, she had contrived to elude it. Indeed that night on the moor had been the beginning of a noticeable and wanton curtailment of his opportunities of seeing

her—a state of affairs which, theoretically perhaps, ought to have been stimulating, but in practice was most depressing. Wherefore one evening he enlisted the help of public opinion.

"Riding," he explained, "is scarcely to be called an accomplishment in a place like this. It is practically a necessity. How is one to cover distance else?"

The guests and family of Mr. Lyttle, including himself, were assembled on the small porch overlooking the hillside and garden. Mr. Morrison was there also. Todhunter's seat was the steps, where he peeled a fuchsia rod while he talked.

Mrs. Dunham feared that one might break one's neck at the pastime, but Ruth who was an expert rider, promptly denied this, and was rewarded by the engineer with a look.

"I had to learn," she said. "I don't think you need fear about Jessie. My neck isn't broken, you know."

Said Mr. Lyttle grimly from his retired corner, "And there's Tod, you know, Mrs. Dunham. Depend upon it he knows his business. Why, teach-

ing young ladies to ride is second nature with a fellow like him."

The porch laughed, but Todhunter solemnly peeled the fuchsia rod. Jessie's seat was immediately behind him and a scent of roses assailed his senses, as a single blossom that had lain all evening on her bosom was twirled idly near his head.

"At least," said her silvery nonchalant voice, "one wouldn't afterwards need to be held on a horse like a sack of potatoes. That's humiliating."

To this awful perversion of facts the engineer merely held his tongue. If anything, that large indefinite locality he called his heart only beat the harder with ardor and obstinacy.

"Todhunter," said Mr. Lyttle, "have you no defense? Any man who allows a young lady to feel she is a sack of potatoes is positively unspeakable, sir."

"Luke would never have been guilty of it, Tod," said the divine, with a mild twinkle.

Grave, lovably mighty Todhunter in the toils, was not to be resisted. The company loved him for it, and wished him well to a man, and did not spare him.

At this juncture the rose, twirled too rashly, struck him on the shoulder. He unostentatiously kept it, and rising to his feet, answered all the well pleased company's joint remarks.

"All the more reason for learning to ride." Turning, he smiled straight at his lady, who suddenly looked guilty. "If I made you feel so—or like anything except what I said you were—it was certainly unspeakable of me. If you'll learn to ride—"

"What did he say you were, Jessie? Tell us," laughed the company.

"A ghost," said Jessie, demurely. But alarmed by his sudden expression she added quickly, "I'll begin to-morrow, Tod, if you like. I've promised to go and visit the old preacher, but I'll come afterwards, will that do?" So the next morning he gave her the first lesson on his horse, Pawnee.

Every day thereafter when he was in Staley Crags the lessons were continued. He was conscious, however, in every nerve and fibre that Jessie avoided him a little, and being always supersensitive in spite of his bold front, he carefully forbore to press her. He humbly considered that he

had achieved very much—more than such a man as he was had the right to hope; for she saw a lover in him and did not turn away scorning. It was much less then a month, even yet. The childish acquaintance no longer counted. It would never count again, he knew with elation. On that mist laden night on the moor they had stood together as mere man and woman, and she knew it was her woman's love he asked of her—which he still strove for with fearful jealousy.

Sometimes on their trips together he related to her the wild strange lore of the countryside, in which he was widely versed. He had always been an eager student of many matters besides those of his profession; and unconsciously he distilled much of himself into the tales, and she learned his heart, or some corners of it, over again. The man was not altogether as the boy. Sitting on Pawnee, stately and sweet and serious, her head no great distance above Todhunter's, Jessie learned many things about a man's thoughts not usually written in books. She grew less and less flippant with him, and could forget his ugliness; and at times even wondered a little whether something profound and

beneficent were not touching her. So likewise she revealed to him herself, and he grew every hour more and more deeply enamored of the revelation.

But as the days passed there grew deep down in him a strange and unaccustomed fear, which she could never have guessed at, and he would have died in ignominy rather than admit. It concerned Luke, that handsome brother of his soul whose return was already greatly overdue—whom Jessie as yet did not know.

Just at this time he received a letter from Luke. It was dated from Paris.

"Too close attention to business," wrote the cavalier, "had seriously depressed his health, which was always apt to be weakly when anything in the nature of work was imminent. Todhunter might recall the fact. Cornish air usually aggravated the malady, as it meant further work. It was, therefore, best avoided for the next few days; but they would see him in a week."

At the end was a rollicking but genuine postscript.

"Note received from father same time as your last made an assertion about you which I wouldn't

believe—not if the angel Gabriel had written it to me. Father alleged you were enamored of a girl! Thee Todhunter. My prophetic soul—did I forecast it or did I not? But by thunder if it is true, mine uncle Arthur shall answer to me for it. And e'en if it is true, then Tod, old man, may God bless thee. Go in and win her. Thy Luke."

Todhunter reddened and put the letter in his pocket, where it burned him like coals of fire.

* * * * * * *

On days when he was away, or down the mine, Jessie went frequently to visit the preacher, who was making a rapid recovery. Todhunter's house was ruled, in name, by ancient Mrs. Bell, whose tongue the preacher feared. When his host was away he spent the hours carefully beyond reach of it.

Jessie found him walking one day on the hillside. The two sat upon a rock, and he bared his white head to the sunshine and sighed.

"The old dame's tongue fills the house. There is no silence anywhere," he said, regretfully. "I have heard the monkeys in the forests of Brazil, and they are no worse."

He was a stately, keen featured old man. The fanaticism that had marked him before his fever seemed to be in abeyance since; and about him clung always a simple dignity that woke the young girl's respectful pity while it interested her.

"You have traveled a great deal?" she said, questioningly.

"Yes. All over the world." His eyes wandered reminiscently up and down the valley; then his face grew eager, he shook back his white hair. "North, south, east and west, I have seen all the races of men at home. In the north I have drunk reindeer's milk and seen the sun shining on the snow at midnight. On the plains of Tartary, where the Great Wall is, I have seen men who wore coats of sheepskin and ate sheep's tails for a delicacy. I went disguised into Llassa, the holy city of Thibet; but there I was discovered and almost killed before I could escape. In India I had a further adventure, for I caught the cholera in one of their cities and was carried down to the burning ghats for dead. But I revived; and an Englishman saw me and took me to his house until I recovered; so I escaped that also. Then I came through Persia into

Assyria, where I stood in the bed of the Euphrates in the dry season, and saw the mounds that cover the ancient city of Babylon, which the Lord cursed for her sins. The desolation is like that of the Dead Sea which covers Sodom and Gomorrah, the wicked cities of the plain. On camels I journeyed into Egypt, where I stood in the tombs of the kings. In Algiers I rode asses, after the custom of that country; and once, south of the great desert—in a land where I had the fortune to cure a king of his fever—I was carried on the backs of his slaves."

The preacher seemed to have forgotten his surroundings; the hemmed-in Cornish valley and the blue-eyed girl who listened. Through his gestures, his vehement dark eyes lit up with the fire of hidden energies, Jessie seemed to see the things his fancy looked upon.

"I should like to travel and see all the strange places in the world. Tod said you were a great scholar," she said, in a low voice, not wishing to disturb the wanderer's reverie. He did not hear her, and presently she said again, "But your home is somewhere in England, of course, is it not?"

For a moment his fire was quenched as utterly

as though she had thrown water on it. He had become only a tired old man with white hair.

"No," he said, mournfully, "I do not know. I had one once. When I was young I was learned, and held the Chair of the dead languages in a great university. Men said I was a savant. I had a home in those days."

He halted strangely as though seeking for some memory.

"Then the call came upon me to go and preach. It was a call from heaven;" his voice rose sterner and higher as the old ardor temporarily reasserted itself. "I obeyed it and went; leaving my honors and my home behind me. I do not know how long nor how far I traveled, for memory left me for many months. I had utterly forgotten everything except my mission. I traveled on foot. My money was all gone. At times I suffered great hardships. At last I found myself in England again, but my home was lost."

The unmistakable quaver of age and grief was in the old voice now.

"I have grown old, but I have never found it since. My name and the name of the place are all

a blank to me. I have nothing but the dream of it. Sometimes I think it was never anything more than a dream. But I see the faces of my wife, and my little son, and I know that is not a dream—and I keep on searching."

Jessie's thought was of the wife and son who, it might be, were still waiting for the wanderer. Here was perhaps a double tragedy. But the preacher's head was sunk on his breast, and he looked so pathetic and broken and lonely in the midst of these memories he had evoked, that she forbore to question him. Seeing that he had forgotten her presence and perhaps wished to be alone with his phantoms of past days, she left him and wandered on down the hill.

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She stood in the edge of a corn field where poppies nodded their heads of red silk, and commenced to gather them. A man was advancing swiftly up the path, and as he drew nearer her heart began to beat rapidly. It was Todhunter, and this time he was not to be avoided.

He had never seemed so strong, or so great and quiet. She could feel his presence across the three

feet of breeze swept yellow that intervened. Smiling, she shook the red blossoms carelessly in greeting, knowing that their color was in her cheeks. Then a sudden strange fancy seized her.

"Tod, have you ever traveled?" she said.

"Never beyond London. I had to go there to pass my examinations for engineer, of course. Why?"

"Nothing." She looked at him across the poppies. "When I saw you I suddenly had a queer vision. Old Babylonia, deserts, tombs, dead and musty dynasties of kings. Oh, I'm not crazy." She laughed—"I've been to see the poor old preacher. He put that nonsense into my head."

As she stepped out on the path a brier caught and entangled itself in the hem of her dress. Todhunter stooped and disengaged it. Looking up to the yellow glory of sunlight around her head, and the shadow cast in her eyes by her wide hat, he paraphrased broadly like that lover and idolater he was.

"Standing breast high amid the corn
Clasped by the golden light of morn
Like the glowing sweetheart of the sun—"

"Oh," she cried, and laughing, smote his upturned face lightly with the poppies, "why Tod, you're positively the floweriest cavalier in all England."

Smiling he finished his task in silence and rose.

"Jessie, I must go down the coast to-morrow to inspect the other mines in my charge. Let me take you to ride before I go. I'll bring Pawnee round this afternoon—may I?"

"Will you quote verses at me?" she asked, delaying the boon he sought.

"On my honor—not if I can help it," he answered promptly. Smiling, she flung the red poppies to him for answer, and he caught them.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE SEA ROAD.

Gray clouds were traveling rapidly up out of the horizon, and the fleecy mists were descending soft footed from the hills. The glory of the morning was gone.

The finding of a suitable house for the Dunhams had been repeatedly discussed, but each time had been sidetracked by Mr. Lyttle, who declared that there were no houses of any kind available at present; and that in any case there was no hurry. So it happened that Ruth Hardy, who later was to figure in a story of her own such as no one could have forseen or guessed at in those days, was going back to the north the next day without having seen the future home of her friends.

Ruth stood by the window. Jessie had vanished into those mists without, and with her a rider who might have been the phantom of some paladin of old romance. With long looking, the mist had

crept by stealth across Ruth's eyes, but as she turned away she laughed.

"It's just his setting, or it's my foolishness. Either way I'm going to-morrow. Ugly wooden doll! I wonder, if he knew that, whether—No, it wouldn't make any difference to him if he did know it."

Then she went away to discuss trains and trunks with Mrs. Lyttle.

That was Ruth's point of view in those days. Yet perhaps the trouble was not so deep as it seemed, for it is certain that she lived to forget about it. And Jessie had her point of view also, which we know had altered considerably in six weeks.

Meantime as she rode with him down the highway in the valley, Todhunter said, "I'm going to take you down to the sea road to-day, Jessie. You've never been there."

"Yes I have. The sea should be sulky, and gray to-day under this mist, with the raindrops pitting down into it from nowhere."

"If it rains though, I'll have to bring you home," he objected.

"No you won't. I don't fade so easily. Does any one come home for rain in Cornwall?" She struck Pawnee lightly and was gone, and Todhunter followed.

The sea road was an esplanade blown into the face of the cliff and extending about half a mile round a bold headland beyond the harbor. It was the work of a capitalist who in recent years had thought to make of the place a fashionable summer resort.

Once around the headland one came upon the endless domain of waters, against whose wild eternal onslaught land had thrust forth her outposts in the line of broken, savage cliffs. Here at one's feet the round bowed shoulders of Earth upheaved out of the west, clothed in the gray flowing mantle of the seas. Above, and beyond, and all about hung nothing else but the mighty universe—winds and clouds and vast sunshiny space, or mist as it was this day.

The horses swept around the point neck by neck. Todhunter was more silent than was his wont. He found Jessie more than ordinarily wild and elusive toward him to-day, as she had been in that other

mist some weeks past. Scarcely even would she allow him beside her. For she read in his face those things with which his tongue was burning; and because she had consentingly thrown him the poppies, which were almost a love token between them, it pleased her now to be wilful and to set him at a certain distance from her.

Pawnee was swift, and she kept a little ahead. That great black horse he bestrode was swifter, had she known it; so it was rather he who kept behind, because he saw that she wished it so. As the panorama of waters flowed to their feet she shook out her whip widely and embracingly to it, as though utterly in love with it. But it was, in truth, a challenge to him.

He said not a word, but kept his place near her without effort. His ugliness was lost in surroundings like these. Only that certain gentle greatness in him looked forth and claimed kinship with whatever was massive and enduring and strong.

So, almost without volition of his, and because, in part, his lady was so elusive and scarce knew her own mind concerning him as yet, that thing which he so greatly longed for befell.

As she fled there crept upon Jessie first a vague sense, then the conviction that she was being pursued by this steady, gentle, silent lover; that earth was but the strip of rock beneath their horses' feet, and yonder gray heaving infinity, soft as wool, the goal where he would overtake her. He was saying something, but she could not hear for the blowing of the wind upon her ears; she did not appreciate that the narrowing of the road, and the sinister approach of the dark frowning cliff marked the dangerous end. She was thinking, with fear and shamed delight, of that instant when Todhunter would overtake her. Suddenly, with a sharp command his hand was on Pawnee's bit; he was down on his feet, and the arm she fled from was round her as the horse stopped with a jerk that almost unseated her.

"I spoke to you but you did not hear. I was obliged to stop you." As he looked at her, sudden hope, inquiry, doubt—twenty things were in his eyes and voice, and every one of them was love. His arm, slackened, still lay across Pawnee's back.

"I won," she said, but looked past him seaward. Her heart was beating with fearful rapidity. In

all the world no man's arm except his might lie in that position acceptably.

"Jessie, were you running away from me?" he queried low and incredulous.

"Of course not." But the blood in her face told him.

He was so still. How his deep gray eyes uncovered her mendacity and loved it. The mist had moistened her hair and her face; and her lips, wet with it, were the most fearfully sweet temptation in life to him. His arm closed round her in a passion of love, and he drew her toward him.

"Let me down, Tod," she whispered, slipping in haste almost through his hold. But he held her. Her ear was his. Into it he poured the words with which his heart and life were passionately throbbing.

But she made no response. Finding this he strove with quiet tender hand to turn her face, whispering, "Love, let me look at you. I want to say something," and she yielded to him.

So high he was, bending above her, his love of her ennobling his features. So, in early days, perhaps those sons of God looked, who first found

the daughters of men, that they were fair. But the depths of Todhunter's passion troubled and humbled him; because, looking on the great beauty of his love, surrendered to his arms, he remembered what he himself was. His shaken low voice continued.

"It is nothing that I should love you, Jessie. It was written so in the beginning for me, when I was a little lad. But that you should listen, dear—"

"No, no, Tod; don't say that. Don't!"

His voice was music. He touched her hair softly and hushed her. "I must, darling. I've loved you always—God knows how dearly—and I've dared to hope for you. But you must look at me, Jessie. Look well! My beloved—are you quite sure of what you're doing?"

His arm slackened that she might draw apart and view him dispassionately, where no emotion and no prayer of his might interfere to do her wrong. But as Jessie looked up to his height a spark that sped straight out between her fog-weighted lashes struck him in the eyes.

"What am I expected to say, Tod?" she inquired. The wilful lovely flippancy of her red lips

was invitation itself. She felt a terrible swift tightening of his arms and vanished into them.

"Tod," she cried, from their remote recesses, "you great dear simpleton. Did you ever make love to a girl before?"

Said he, very close now, with a wondrous rich musical tremor in the words, "On my honor, darling, I never did. And I didn't mean to be clumsy."

Then for a while his dark head lay very quiet and still beside her bright one, and the mist came creeping down upon them and silently folded them both round, as though in jealousy lest even the eyes of the gray old world should witness that dear betrothal.

* * * * * * * *

Todhunter quickly recovered his old quiet aplomb. Presently, when Jessie, with deep shy eyes meeting his, asked him, "which way shall we go home, Tod," he answered smiling, with his old promptitude. "The longest way round, dear—if you're willing."

Then with erect buoyant strength he carried her in his arms up the steep jagged trail to the moor, whispering to her objection that she was lighter than feathers but more precious than gold to him;

and he dared not trust even Pawnee to carry her up that dangerous place. On a ledge half way up he halted and took graceless advantage of the position; but afterwards, in his great humility, whispered, "Jessie, you're quite sure darling, aren't you, that it isn't disagreeable to you—when I kiss you?"

His sweetheart laid her hand upon his eyes. "Tod, I love you—you dear big wonderful fellow, can't you understand?"

Later, as they rode slowly homeward over the shrouded moors he showed her all his heart, and unfolded his plans to her. She discovered that, in one direction, he was full of deep-rooted pride in himself.

"You know all about me, and what my story has been, Jessie. I believe my name to be an honest one, but I can offer no proofs. In my hands at least, it has been clean; and my ambition has been to make it honorable. I've enough—plenty for two, dear. You see, for a young man, I've been what the world would call fairly successful. Mr. Lyttle will tell you that. You don't think I'm bragging, to say this to you, Jessie."

She said softly, "No. I've heard the same from

others, Tod." Repressed satisfaction crossed his dark features. He went on.

"I mean to go to the top, Jessie. I think I have a fair show. Years ago, when I was a boy of fifteen down the mine, I saw what it meant to march with the rank and file of the men down there, and I determined then that the only thing for me to do was to catch up with the leaders. In degree, I've done it. That was for my own sake, and some one else's—my mother's whom some day I'll tell you about, dear. Now that I'm to have you"—the shadow fled from his face; spurring his horse closer to Pawnee he laughed in the joy and wonder of that tender ownership—"now that you love me, Jessie"—But the words died in an extravagance that only his sweetheart's ear heard.

The old moor, and the Cornish mists that knew him so well, wreathed about and peered upwards at the maiden, and decided that Todhunter was walking in the path of all his forefathers since Adam.

By and by he came down to prosaic facts. In a day or two his life would be darkened, since he must leave her and go up to London. The Society

of Mining Engineers, to which he belonged, had called upon him regarding a certain technical subject in dispute among the profession, on which he was reputed to have ideas of practical value. The occasion might or might not be momentous to him. He could not afford to miss it. He would be absent a week, or at most ten days.

By and by he checked both the horses on a sudden and stood listening. Far away behind them came on the faint beat of galloping hoofs, which his ear, accustomed to sounds and distances in those parts, had first detected.

"That should be Jingo's step. If it is, Luke Lyttle is on his back. He ought to be here to-day or to-morrow."

"Oh," said Jessie. "Luke! He used to scold me when I was little."

But Todhunter smiled in grave enthusiasm. Luke nigh, it is possible that for one instant love itself dropped into the background. "He's the handsomest fellow for miles round here," he said, —then after a moment, and looking quickly at her —"I grieve to say, Jessie, that he never scolds young ladies in these days, however."

Laughing comprehendingly, in a second she had raised his strong dark hand to her cheek and dropped it again. Great Todhunter reddened like a girl at the caress.

He sent back a long clear whistle, not loud or piercing, but full of reserve force, like himself, and destined to travel far through space. Standing in the road, his swarthy face eager, he listened for the reply.

Down the wind it came—very faintly. Probably there was less power in its birth. He turned smiling, and briefly announced "Luke!"

The distinguished looking and handsome cavalier who presently drew near on his lathered and foam flecked horse Jingo, had discovered the lady long before her eyes could separate him from the murk. His head was bared as he rode up; but his outstretched right hand, his smile and the ring of his greeting were wholly for his friend.

"How?" said he as the engineer's hand shot swiftly to his. Todhunter's greeting was of like pattern; then almost before the traveler's eyes had time to turn to Jessie, Todhunter led him up; and

Luke met again his youth's playmate, grown to so lovely a woman.

Not by a sign did he betray the knowledge that was his by his father's letter. That matter lay between himself and his friend. He was Luke Lyttle, who was in all respects thoroughbred. Debonair charm radiated from him, shining irrepressibly in the admiring glances he bestowed on Todhunter's lady, as he rode on the other side of her home to Staley Crags.

It had been his deep misfortune, he said, to be delayed from home so long.

"My mother wrote me of your coming, and I've been hastening by every possible means to get back, and renew old acquaintance; but business is a slow nag—as you don't know probably—and won't be driven. Then again, I dared not meet our autocrat until I could answer all his inconvenient questions satisfactorily."

Todhunter, for several reasons, was smiling throughout this peroration. Jessie, laughing, said, "Oh, and who is your autocrat?"

"Haven't you met him yet! He's a rank idolater, with an uncomfortable fetich which he calls

Duty. My objection to him is that he makes me worship it with him, when personally my convictions lie all in the opposite direction. Strangers should be warned against him. He's a bigot."

The stranger he would warn smiled on him adorably. "So painful for you; but what is the name of the monster?"

"Your sympathy," the merry cavalier replied, "will make my wrongs supportable henceforth. He is known to a few of us about here as 'Tod.'"

"Tod. I knew it!" Jessie glanced swiftly at her engineer, sitting the saddle great and grim, a tolerant smile on his lips. The good tempered affection of his reply when it came only made it fall the more heavily.

"My friend Luke is supported already by the sympathies of half the pretty girls in Cornwall, Jessie. The fact is—it's his specialty. When he runs short of grievances he merely invents one. My friend Luke"—the voice dropped to a smiling whisper—"my friend Luke's a fraud."

The cavalier indignantly protested, but Jessie only laughed; and after a little they came riding home together to Staley Crags.

CHAPTER XIV.

TODHUNTER MAKES AMENDS.

The lovers kept their secret for the present. That is, Todhunter kept it. Jessie kept it for that night at least, but the next day she had to tell it to Ruth who was going away. Ruth said she was very happy over it, and, just before the train drew out of Treddlestone, kissed Jessie again with unusual fervor. Very probably, therefore, Ruth *was* happy.

Some few nights later there was a conference of the powers in the Lyttle house—the powers including the whole Lyttle family and every one friendly or connected with it.

Jessie had said that the business of finding a house must be seriously set about, or that she and her mother would regretfully go away to some other valley in Cornwall; wherefore the hospitable Lyttles had come together in council.

"There's only one house in the place that I know

of," Mr. Lyttle said. "That's a ramshackle affair of my own up above here. It's been vacant these three years, and I've let it go to the dogs. You can't leave us just yet, anyway."

But Mr. Lyttle had already used this argument so often that Jessie said it was worn out. She wanted to know exactly what kind of repairs the house needed.

"Well, a number of kinds, painting, plastering, papering. Half the windows are broken; the rising generation has been using them for target practice."

"I can mend windows, anyway," Jessie said. "You put putty on them. I always loved putty. One can do anything with it." She sat in a low rocking chair, and wafted a white and scarlet lace fan at intervals. The breeze from it blew on Todhunter's forehead, and the frill on her fleecy white dress brushed his foot. Jessie knew both these things.

Mr. Lyttle—a very discerning gentleman who did not know everything, but could guess at one or two things sometimes—could see Todhunter. Mr. Lyttle's eyes, for some reason, were twinkling

appreciatively. He would be really sorry when Jessie went.

"There's a lot of lumber up there that I meant to make a porch of, Jessie. You might try that after the windows," he suggested.

"Tod can do the porch. It's in his line. He's an engineer, isn't he?" She wondered why Mr. Lyttle laughed. Todhunter was smiling, too; and as she saw it the color of her fan fled into her face.

"Oh, well; that's a joke, I suppose; but I didn't mean it for one. An engineer ought to know how to build a porch." She sailed away, blushing but insouciant, to a tea table. "I'm going to serve tea, now. Anybody who laughs, won't get any."

Gravity, instant and profound, settled down upon the men. Jessie was very lovely. Her eyes looked dark in the lamplight. The cavalier, at home three days now, watched her quietly from his corner, as well he might.

Todhunter suddenly inquired in a quiet and impressive voice. "Apropos of houses—what distinguishing family characteristic does the habitant of Staley Crags exhibit in common with other members of the gasteropoda?"

"Mercy," cried Jessie, mournfully. "I've spilt the tea. A gasteropoda! Tod, how could you?"

It was the cavalier who first sprang to her aid.

"He only wants to know why we're like snails, Jessie. Tod likes to wrap his riddles in wadding. He ought to put them in German. He'd find the language specially adapted."

"Hmm," said the elder Lyttle, "Tod, why're we like snails?"

"Because the only way you can get a house down here is to be born in it; and the only way you can keep it is to carry it with you when you move," said Todhunter, looking ashamed of himself.

In the deep silence that ensued the host grunted expressively, and Todhunter added meekly, "That just occurred to me, it's an original one of my own." Jessie sending him some tea by Luke's hand, was heard to remark that she didn't think it was necessary to tell people that—that the riddle was slower if anything than the gasteropoda.

"Of course," said the engineer, beaming swiftly but most tenderly upon her, "why shouldn't it be, with the whole house sitting on it?"

After a second or two everybody said "Ah!" in

unison, and drank tea; and went back to the original discussion.

The upshot was that the little house which was the only one Staley Crags had left over for strangers was to be put into repair at once, and Luke Lyttle was to oversee the operation. Todhunter was to leave for London next day; so if in his heart he would have preferred to hear of some other arrangement he did not mention it.

On his return he would bring something with him that should suitably proclaim to them all that he had won his lady. He was most deeply proud of her beauty; any man would have been proud, so how much the more he—and he resented with a fierce barbaric sort of jealousy every moment that kept him from adorning her as his love wished.

In public he checked the wild desire of his eyes to watch her. But his seat was near her. His mind, wherein his strength lay, was constantly thinking—thinking of her. When she should be his wife! The thought was a whip. His leaping ambitions strained under it as dogs on the leash. For all his mighty, sane, quiet exterior, he was in

reality a freebooter, ready to rifle the whole world of its treasures and beauty for her.

Only with meeting eyes, under the glow of lamplight, they took leave of each other. But at the very last there was an instant when he stood beside her in the darkness of the porch. Afterwards he strode away in the starlight like an intoxicated giant, conscious of nothing in the universe except his lips, on which her kiss lay lighter and sweeter than a flower.

Some slight figure, huddled beside the path along which he was rapidly walking, rose and came like a shadow to his side and took his hand timidly, and without a word. It was Jan, resplendent with his new yellow crutch. Jan's habit of nights was to wait in highways and byways for his friend, whom he regarded now with worship mute and passionate as his former fear had been.

Todhunter had been preoccupied of late, however. Boys and their feelings were matters the least ecstatic in his mind, and he had not noticed the dog-like disappointment of the child as they parted night after night.

"Little Jan—you're fast becoming a confirmed

night hawk!" he said, abstractedly smiling; and then, leaving his hand in the boy's hand, quickly forgot he was there.

Curses and blessings were alike to Jan when they came in words, for he never heard any of them. It was his small hand that told him he was no more to his idol to-night than the grasses on the hillside.

They reached a spot where a crooked path went winding off amongst stunted and scattered bushes; and here Jan eloquently expressed his feelings. He dropped the hand of that neglectful friend and vanished into the midnight with a low sound utterly sorrowful and pathetic.

Todhunter, standing conscience stricken, called after him until he suddenly remembered the uselessness of it.

"Poor little chap! I've been neglecting him, but I'll make it up to-morrow. No, I'm going away to-morrow. I wonder if he knew that. I'm a selfish beast."

Deserted he walked home by himself. Somehow he was thinking considerably now of another lad who had long ago been friendless and shy and lonely—very like Jan in fact. By contrast with

those days the happiness of this grew almost to an enormity; and he reiterated in contrition as he reached his own door, "I'm a selfish beast. Poor Jan!"

Next morning he rode away for Treddlestone on the large black horse. His swift and gently bred Pawnee he had left for Jessie's use, because he would not trust her on any other.

Anything large and powerful and magnificent became him well because he was so great and so handsomely proportioned. He was smiling slightly as he paused here and there to inspect certain crannies of the glen as though in search of something. Under his arm he carried a lively kicking brown bundle, whose struggles only served to increase a certain tender reminiscence in his smile.

He had given up his search in those parts when, looking up, he beheld his sweetheart standing with Luke before the vacant house on the hill. Luke had taken on his duties early. A momentary jealous fear, that reared its dark head unworthily in the lover, died away. His hand felt again the reassuring pressure of her cheek, as she had pressed it when they awaited together the coming of this

same handsome Luke. On his lips came again the soft sweet flutter of her good-bye. Dear God! how tumultuously his heart labored! How fair a woman she was to give herself to the love of such an ugly fellow as he! Suddenly she turned—feeling him passing perhaps—and the yellow hazy sunlight revealed him to her in the distance, bareheaded, waving his hand in farewell. The next second he had swept around a hillock and was gone to fight and work and win for her.

* * * * * * * *

A trifling diversion shortly happened on the hill. It was so glaringly apparent that Jessie had not been listening to him that Luke was obliged to repeat himself. Noting how her color had deepened he looked quickly and comprehensively up and down the glen, seeking the reason. He had half expected to see Todhunter somewhere, and was ridiculously relieved when he did not. The cavalier would have scorned the thought of doing a wrong to any man, most of all to the man who was his friend; but the girl was most lovely, and he was growing illogical about her.

Suddenly a little clump of moist earth with green

grass still attached struck the side of the house with a thump, scattering its particles all over her. Jessie sprang back startled, shaking her dress free. The aim had seemed so deliberate.

Luke's handkerchief quickly flicked the dirt away from her dress, her hair, likewise a little spot on her cheek. But a second clod, better aimed, struck her shoulder squarely, splitting on it and almost blinding the cavalier.

"Mercy, this is serious," she laughed, and ran dirt-bespattered into the house. Luke Lyttle wiped the earth out of his eyes and started with sure instinct for a clump of bushes close by, breathing vengeance on the young idiot who had dared.

"They came from there; I saw them," she said.

Sure enough hidden in the bushes was the culprit, his fierce little eyes shooting forth hate and cordial fright on the indignant gentleman whom he knew but could not name. Never a word said the culprit, but leaned on his crutch and awaited annihilation. It had not occurred to his philosophy when he threw stones at that beautiful girl, whom he hated for stealing his friend's heart from

him, that an angry man would descend upon him and drag him to account.

Luke, more disgusted and amused than angry, quickly put him out of suspense. Lifting crutch and kicking, screaming warrior together in his arms he carried them to the open and gave them a swift congé in unmistakable sign language; and Jan, terrified and eager to escape, hobbled rapidly up to the moor and out of sight.

Somewhere up there among the long grasses he found joy again. Todhunter, following the road, had skirted round the head of the gorge and come out on the moor, still pausing at intervals to search for something. The brown bundle beneath his arm had begun to yelp so frantically that for peace's sake he set its four silly fat legs down on the horse's back. It had long down-dropping, silken ears, innocent blue eyes, and a stubby, baby pink nose; and it suspected the whole big world of designs upon itself.

"We'll call you Bundle, you nice little chap," said the man, with that same look of tender reminiscence; "I only wish you could half appreciate the compliment."

Just then the distorted little figure for which he was searching appeared, hobbling joyously to meet him. Todhunter was never to experience a purer or better emotion than the one he felt while introducing Jan and little Bundle. But he was late and could not delay long. Five minutes later he had ridden away in hot haste, leaving them frollicking happily together. He was still smiling.

"If Jessie had caught you cuddling that blessed puppy, Tod, she'd have called you a silly old sentimentalist, which I believe you are. What's the odds as long as we're all happy? The pup's happy, Jan's happy, I'm happy; and I think Jessie's happy too—God bless her and keep her."

He laughed aloud in sheer content, and urged his large black horse faster.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. PAYSON OF CORNWALL.

The scientific body of the Society of British Mining Engineers was conducting its evening session with the vigor of a class of ennuied schoolboys on a sultry afternoon. As it was such a scientific body, however, met together for the scientific advancement of a profession dear to the interest of every member there, it would not do to say this to its face of course. It is a daring and witless thing to poke fun at Science, particularly when she is deliberating about herself. Any one of these keen-eyed, practical gentlemen would have made the joker who attempted such a thing speedily regret it.

The weather was warm, and the air of the amphitheater had grown doubly heated from its many illuminations. Beyond the gaping windows the great city roared and droned and buzzed. Many of the members had come from remote quiet towns where fate and business had cast their lots; many

of them had brought their wives on the trip, to see the city; many of them, especially the graybeards, had heard all these things an infinite number of times before. We all know that the most tiresome thing about a lesson book is the never-ending familiarity of the old object; and a good many of the engineers were privately scanning the programme and making mental note to be elsewhere during to-morrow's session.

Seated in the place of honor was a deputation of three gentlemen who did not feel the heat, however. These the Society would have delighted to interest and honor if it could; only, unfortunately, no interesting thing would present itself. They were engineers from the rich copper mines of Australia, who wished to learn the latest wrinkles in scientific mining of their brothers at home. A Lancashire man's description of a new device in coal drills that was being experimented in his county provoked some feeble discussion by the local interest present, but it did not enthrall the copper miners. The President felt nervously responsible for the general dullness of the proceedings.

He politely hurried the Lancashire man. He had

a feeble hope when he looked over at the spot where sat the contingent from Cornwall, fellows who knew all about copper mining, with or without tin. There were several of them; clannish, fine-looking men who when they said anything said it with the dogmatic conviction that no one in the world was in a position to contradict them. Above all, their leader was a demonstrated firebrand, whose opinions could be relied upon to set the scientific body aflame in five minutes. He was to follow the Lancashire man. Better things might certainly be looked for presently.

He was quite a young man. But evidently the Society had heard somewhat of him, for it wanted to see him. When his name was announced a sudden breeze of interest sprang up, such as actually rustled some of the sultriness out of the atmosphere. Hearing it, the President sighed and settled back more comfortably in his seat. From now on the session might probably be trusted to take care of itself.

Subtly, as when the first glimpse of some favored singer catches up and compels all eyes, Todhunter's appearance gripped his audience. As he passed rap-

idly down the house the deep silence of transfixed, startled attention followed him, greeted him when he turned. That instant the complacent first thought of every man in the house was to call himself an Adonis, yet with most the idea grew faint after the first moment of looking. As Todhunter stood up before them all, and his gray eyes looked out on them without shrinking, they grew vaguely cognizant, as others had, of the personality of the man hidden behind that lying mask. No suggestion of belligerence—rather a quiet, pathetic grandeur, mingled with the strength of his mighty shoulders, formed, it would almost seem, for the bearing of burdens which other shoulders perchance might find too heavy. The longer the audience looked on him the keener grew its desire to hear what he had to say.

As soon as he spoke, it wondered why it had associated the notion of belligerence with him. There was no more of that than of hesitation. He was just one thing—an expert who knew his business and was stating it. He challenged no other man's opinions, yet expressed his own with a matter-of-fact, pacific unconsciousness that there *were*

any others, or were likely to be. He said, "I did this," and "I believe," and "I find," whenever he desired, exactly as though he had no knowledge that his hearers had *not* found, and did *not* believe and did *not* do so, and had already vigorously expressed themselves to that effect. And yet all the time his great innate gentleness—which would have lost force in a smaller man, but in him seemed absolutely essential because he was so large—enwrapped the fraternity like a charm. Disagreeing, doubting, questioning, to a man it listened. And as it listened to that most ugly giant it began unawares to love him.

The President looked at the visiting deputation and sighed with happiness. There was no doubt whatever what the deputation thought of the proceedings now.

The very quietude of the amphitheater, the rows of illumined upturned faces, the deep stillness, and the flashing of keen, practical eyes as the speaker, rapidly and deftly covering one point after another, scored on each, foretold the storm of discussion that would follow. Todhunter used no dramatic gestures; the drama lay in his control of that body, its rapt attention and dissent, and in his gentle,

splendid, ruthless disregard of it. He seemed unaware of how its many eyes watched him. Nature apparently, by her very harshness, had over-reached herself in him, and left him free and quietly superior to all vanity and self-consciousness such as more fortunate men may feel and suffer.

There would certainly be discussion—plenty of it. The Cornish contingent smiled in dignified retirement and vicariously swelled; it had none of Todhunter's lack. It was clannish, moreover. It wanted very much to know who in the British Empire could tell Cornwall anything about mining—especially tin or copper mining.

However, that the scientific body did not give a fig, or a rap, for Cornwall was very speedily and painfully apparent to the contingent. Instantly as the speaker sat down discussion broke forth. It was not an ordinary discussion. The gentlemen appointed by the chair to discuss the paper could not satisfy the house at all, or express its feelings. From all sections members sprang up, wanting to know, and launching interrogations at the head of that large gentle member who sat adjacent to the President's chair. He, for reply, took notes on little

slips of paper, but made no sign for the present. His face was ever so slightly averted. Perhaps after all he was self-conscious. Perhaps he had in him some of the vanities and sensitiveness of other men, and was bowing to them now!

Who could tell? Not his vainglorious Cornish brothers, who only saw his glory. But as he sat there, ugly and magnificent and reserved, his heart movement slightly accelerated by combat, he had consolation also beyond any dream of theirs. He was greedily measuring these honors by what they were going to bring him; and his measure was one half hour in a certain spot on the sea road overhanging a wild Cornish coast—where Jessie whispered her promise to him once again between his kisses.

He had leaped in a single night into the limelight, as he had sworn to her that he could. Henceforth his friends would be numerous.

As he rose to make his reply, holding in one hand those questions which he deemed pertinent and requiring answer, there fell again that curious, expectant hush. He had been criticized, dissected, *demolished,* some thought, and now he was fighting back.

He handled his enemies much as though they had been wasps. One by one he took them up, and accurately, easily, scientifically, and with most fatal gentleness, pinched their buzzing wings off. Then with his own big courtesy he laid the maltreated things down, and let them crawl away. Such a dangerous, kindly courtesy it seemed as he dispensed it, that one instinctively speculated on what he might have done to them if the matter had really roused him.

The house had been so rarely entertained that it had almost forgotten its professional jealousy. When at last the ugly member turned, retreating, bowing stiffly, it rose at him. That overwhelmed giant quickly descended the steps and ran the gantlet of the long aisle, while the house, forgetting its traditions, clambered upon its learned seats to catch a view of him. Such conduct was highly unprofessional and undignified. Never in history had grave scientific body been guilty of it. But where in history had been member so large and ugly and gentle, and wholly extraordinary as this one? The house loved him—he was so very big. Reddening bashfully, his tall head bowing his thanks

for their great kindness, he slipped rapidly through the ranks to his own corner, where he fell into the arms of those grim, delighted friends of his—the Cornish contingent.

* * * * * * * *

At Staley Crags the valley and the moors and sea lay dreaming under the moon.

No stir was on the moors, no hum save that of gliding, resistless waters below, and the singing of the wind as it passed through the grasses overhead.

There is a quality of witchery in white moonlight which distorts things from their true outlines. Mere quietude assumes the holy garb of peace, and fancy comes to us looking like love; and sometimes it has happened that friendship and honor have been innocently and unawares betrayed under the silvery misleading light of the moon.

Corin and Pike, tired sons of misfortune, dreamed under the shadow of a moonlit knoll. There was little more brandy, and they dreamed of that which lay in the abyss in Great Trevanny.

A vision passed before their eyes. Luke Lyttle and a tall girl, very fair and white in the moonlight, but too thoughtful of face, came down in dead silence

towards the knoll. The watchers' thoughts sped to the engineer. Staley Crags knew this girl had lately walked with him.

A honeysuckle tendril brushed her white cheek and snarled her hair, and springing back smote Luke in the face. He received it as if it had been a caress. A tangle of weeds and little bushes almost closed the path, and he stepped in front of her and trod them back with his foot till she should pass. Eager yet humble, his eyes were upon her face; but she walked on, cold and proud, and vouchsafed him not a glance.

So vivid and beautiful was this dream of the moonlight that the watchers' breathing became carefully inaudible.

The cavalier stooped to the girl's feet, and, plucking a dim white rose from its brier, offered it to her with the smiling ceremony of a prince in a fairy tale. Her face relaxed. Smiling in mock ceremonial, as he did, she took it from him. But while their fingers yet touched, the madness of the white moon struck Luke; he bent and ardently pressed the petals with his lips.

The girl dropped the flower with a low, startled

gasp. Then Corin and Pike heard these white dream people speak to each other.

"Jessie, why did you do that?"

"Oh, I had to. It is full of thorns. It stung me." It almost seemed as if the distressed voice was making an appeal of some kind.

"I will remove them,"—to greedy ears the whisper was most audible—"my rose must have no thorns for you, Jessie." With ardor most courteous, and half smiling, Luke bent toward the flower in the dust.

But the girl was a silver white statue standing above him—so reserved, so icily cold, and yet so sweet. Her darkened blue eyes flashed down like cruel stars. She said with biting carelessness, "Oh, no; don't try to remove them, please. It would not be possible. If one doesn't like thorns one had best leave roses alone."

Deeply abashed, Luke ground the flower under his heel. Once more in dead silence the two walked on together through the moonlight. Corin and Pike suddenly awoke, their sympathies vibrating for Luke.

"Poor young man! To think her loves Tod the

best, for all he'm so ugly, an' her so beautiful as an angel!" But Corin's thoughts were profounder, and his words were slower.

"No," he said soberly; "you'm a fool, Pike. You know nothen' of women, but I wor near married once. She loves this one best, but she'm angry with him."

"What for?"

"'Cos such is the way of women. If Master Lyttle wor nothen' to her he could have picked his rose up again. She'd have laughed in place of bein' angry."

They sat quite still for several minutes, deeply thinking. At last by common impulse they smiled on one another, and discerning the same amusing idea in one another's eyes, they winked.

"Tod, now—he'm a powerful big dangerous fellow. He'd like to know about this, I'm sure. If you'm in the right us ought to tell him."

"Tell en and see; you always wor a fool, Pike," Corin retorted. "Why, Tod 'ud kill 'ee for it." Whereat Pike immediately grew thoughtful.

Meantime, knowing nothing of Corin's deep insight into woman, Jessie and Luke walked side by

side in unbroken silence for a while; but after a little began to talk again.

"I would not offend you, Jessie. You are unnecessarily harsh to me, surely."

"Tod's a very old friend of yours, isn't he? How long have you known him?" Jessie's tone was light but a little tremulous. It seemed as though she only wished to change the subject.

"You know—always!"

Now she laughed. The sound of her laugh was very musical, yet Luke did not like to hear it. It seemed enigmatical also.

"Always?" she repeated. "I've known him sixteen years. Oh"—a soft, almost imperceptible quiver checked her voice—"there is nothing small, or treacherous, or despicable in him. Nothing! If I were a man, and he made me his friend, I should be so proud. I should feel it a great honor." Her blue eyes flashed on Luke with unreasonable accusation. " You have never spoken to me of him in all these days."

She must know why he had not. Luke answered her gently in a low, repressed voice.

"Todhunter needs no words of mine. He is my

"Tod's a splendid fellow—far better than I am."—Page 209

friend and I am his. All the world knows the feeling between us. Why do you say these things to me, Jessie?"

"Nothing particular. Only"—she caught her breath, for an outstretching vine rustled across her eyes and Luke put forth his hand and cleared it away—"only I'm going to marry Tod in September."

Five minutes later they had reached the house; but neither had spoken another word. Waiting for the friends who had walked with them to come up, she stood in the shadow of the porch, he slightly lower, still silent, looking out over the valley. Something he must say.

His back was turned to her.

"I knew a little, but not that. I owe you my sincere apology, Jessie, and my best wishes." He turned and took her hand in an appeal almost timid. "Tod's a splendid fellow—far better than I am."

He looked beseechingly on her. He did not mean his humility as a lash—yet it seemed one. Flinging his detaining hand from hers, and gathering regally round her her white dress, she turned and stung him deliberately and fiercely.

"Better than you, Luke? Oh, immeasurably. Better even than I am!"

Her voice died in a queer hybrid sound—partly a laugh, partly an escaping sob thrust backward—and she fled from him, leaving him there stricken and staring after her till the others came up and joined him.

* * * * * * * *

Meantime in London, while the same white moon shone down, momentous things were happening to that friend of whom they spoke.

The Australians, representatives of great mining interests in their own country and keenly alive to the value of men, had discerned in this Mr. Payson, Cornish engineer, the man for whom they had been quietly searching. They had sought him out at his hotel, and there had held a long conference. The end was an offer from them which an ambitious man such as he was could scarce refuse. But Todhunter took it under advisement only. It meant a future in Australia, and he had certain matters, he said, that might interfere.

Long after they had gone he sat by himself, overlooking moonlit London, and thinking of those mat-

ters, thrice dearer to him than even his ambition.

In the morning there remained a few business affairs to transact for the company—affairs which required his personal attention, and then he intended to take an early afternoon train for the west. The business lengthened itself out unexpectedly, however, and he found he could not go that day. So he wrote Jessie a letter, the first that had ever passed between them, saying he would be at home next afternoon and suggesting a certain spot not far from the valley, as a place where possibly she would come to meet him. He was consumed with the longing to see her, he wrote. Would she grant him a moment alone, wherein they would not be overlooked by the eyes of their friends?

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SCHEMERS.

Now Corin, the crony of Pike, was a man of enviable qualities. To his prudence in dealing with men stronger than himself, and his wide experience of women, he added the wiles of a financier. Pike and he had the same ambitions in life. But Corin was much the abler of the two, for when Pike found that he could not attain things in the ordinary way he gave them up and sat down stolidly. Not so Corin. He considered that there might be other ways.

Every day he said that Pike was a fool, and it was his honest conviction. Pike must have had suspicions of it himself, for though he was the larger man of the two he very seldom resented the word. Also he had found that Corin's plans invariably turned out better than his own, wherefore he followed them; which shows that his folly was not altogether hopeless.

While their brandy lasted, life had been pleasant to the two, for the miners had bought, and Corin at least had made money. Pike's money had gone early, because after consuming his own half of the stock his thirst had forced him to become a customer of Corin's. Consequently one member of the firm took a moroser view of life than the other, one windy morning when they met; and Corin was the cheerful one.

"'Tis a sloppy day this mornin'. Where be you goin'?" he inquired.

Pike wrathfully turned both his trousers pockets out by the roots and held them up for the wind to whistle through.

"There's money as ought to be in them, but it's gone somewhere else," he said unpleasantly. "A man must go to work when his pockets be so empty as that."

"Your money's in your stomach, Pike. You'm one of them that likes to keep en there," Corin retorted.

"An' if it's in my stomach then there be holes in your pockets, Corin. 'Tis surely a pity you diden'

marry that time, an' get a wife to mend your pockets."

"Well, well, us mustn't quarrel. If there be money o' yours in my pocket, Pike, who put en there? You did! An' I gived you my good liquor for it, diden' I? Give it back to me if 'ee doan't want it, an' I'll give 'ee they money. A friend can't say no fairer."

Pike said, replacing his pockets, that Corin's friendship cost more than it was worth.

"Well, won't do no good to quarrel. Better stay close to me. Sure there be more money—pocketfuls for both of us. Doan't 'ee want some, Pike?"

Pike said more cheerfully that he did, and inquired where it was to be had. Corin laughed.

"Where? 'Ee couldn't see it, Pike, not if it wor under the poor nose of 'ee. Perhaps now if us wor to ax Tod for some he might give it us. Doan't 'ee think he would?"

"Ax Tod?" Pike's astonishment was so great that he almost shouted.

"Ess, to be sure. Doan't speak so loud. He'm Chief Engineer, an' a terrible big, strong chap, no doubt, but his heart be weak with love, an' he did

us a cruel wrong once. Us can make him pay now for that."

Pike slowly shook his head, in doubt only, not in dissent. "'Twould serve him proper—but how can us do it?" he inquired.

"Just easy. He'm but an ugly gert chap, an' knows it, an' now him an' Master Lyttle be gone an' fallen in love with same woman. That he doan't know yet, an' it bain't for we to tell; not right out, at least. But us can drop a hint—not big enough to make him rage at us, but just so much as 'll lay in his mind, an' fret an' make him want to hear some more. His duty sends him down along every four or five days or so. Just so deep as he'm in love he'll wear an' fret himself all the time to know what his pretty sweetheart be doin'. That us can tell him, Pike."

"Ess, fay! But she'm so beautiful; I'm feared he'd kill us for darin' to speak of her. Besides which, Luke be dear as a brother to him ever since they wor little chaps no bigger'n my hand. Why, they two little devils comed at me one day an' tored half the hair off my head afore I knowed it."

"No matter at all. When a man be in love, Pike,

he doan't think of his brothers no more, but only of her all day. An' he won't kill us neither; for then he'd be feared of never hearin' nothen' no more."

Even while the two perfected their plans, that fire eating engineer who was to be their gold mine was setting forth on his return to the valley.

As the train swept westward with him, leaving the counties behind, he read by the signs that stormy weather hung above the farthest coast. Wind had scattered the rain and the familiar mists; and clouds of dun lead color by turns obscured and supported the lowering sun. Todhunter through half-closed gray eyes beheld the panorama, and calculated that some fifty miles straight out to the flaming horizon Jessie would shortly be setting forth upon Pawnee to the place of rendezvous.

The train swayed sidewise with its own speed, lulling the other passengers gently. Todhunter observed with the superiority of the man who is not asleep. For him this was no day to be spent in dreaming.

Waking or sleeping, presently a vision fell upon him.

A dimness as of deep twilight crept across the

landscape. Darkness it seemed had suddenly come. The flitting country had lost all strange landmarks and become one that he knew. Faint red light was expiring in the sky, and the clouds were night clouds. It was the country of the moors.

This was the place he had set for his rendezvous with Jessie. Not yet! Here was only the old stone village whither he and Jessie had ridden together—where the white arms of the mist had shut him in with her and first taught her to love him. Then a prescience as strange yet as oddly familiar as the scene he looked on fell upon him. *She* would be here.

He saw her—standing solitary beside Pawnee—looking north toward Treddlestone. She was looking for him, her betrothed. The scouring winds were whipping his horse's mane and her own bright beautiful hair which he loved across her eyes. The dying red light over the sea shot across with pointing finger and fell upon her face.

So lovely she was. Todhunter's heart leaped to his throat, and then fell back as though a hand of ice was strangling him. For Jessie had looked at

him, and the unutterable, dreadful sadness he saw in her eyes had turned him cold and sick.

While he looked there came into the picture a tall, silent, hesitating figure, and stood a little way off from her; but she remained so still, her hands clasping his horse's neck, that he knew she was unaware of any presence. He struggled to cry out, but his throat refused to obey. Then that strange sixth sense through which he perceived these things told him it was only the old preacher who stood there. Todhunter no longer feared. The strangely mingled deference, love and entreaty of the old man toward the unconscious girl roused only his wonder and pity. Would not Jessie soon turn and speak?

Then before the startled eyes of the lover was enacted a scene to which with all their keenness they could not discover the clue. Jessie's face was toward the western light; her hand was on the saddle, her head was high, her cheek scarlet; she laughed—and the sound seemed to wither the preacher. Hurriedly turning to Pawnee, she strove to mount; and the tall figure sprang forward and, stooping, made a footrest for her with locked hands. Something in the act roused Todhunter. He would

have sworn he discerned in it the tender gallantry of a lover; but even while he looked a tremulous movement like the flickering of a candle passed across the picture. Jessie was gone, and the old man stood there alone, stricken, gazing after her.

But lo! the dying light of the west, reviving, seemed to fall upon him and enfold him with transfiguring power. Todhunter beheld him young, straight, and beautiful as the girl he had just raised to the saddle; and knew, moreover, that this fading figure's place in his own heart was second only to Jessie's. It was Luke who stood there. The agony of the discovery awakened Todhunter with a start.

Behold! it was but a dream. Gone were the dark moors, and bright red light of afternoon streamed through the window; and southward flitted past him a strange but most pleasant country. Todhunter picked up his paper, smiling to himself in great content, and thus adjured an imaginary Luke.

"God forbid it, old fellow, for thee and me. I fancy I must have eaten something specially unusual last night at supper."

Then, being perfectly healthy in mind and body, he quickly forgot his evil vision.

Later he woke from a reverie to hear the engine screaming for "down brakes." Men with signal flags flashed backward past his window and the train slowed. Presently he learned that a freight train had left the track just ahead, and that the express and its concerns would be compelled to wait.

They were kept there for two tedious hours, while Todhunter thought of his dream and fumed in helpless exasperation. When at last the line was cleared and they sped onward, all hope of keeping his appointment was over. Even at that moment Jessie must be awaiting him upon the moor side, and wondering that he loitered.

CHAPTER XVII.

TODHUNTER AND LUKE.

Through Treddlestone, where he had many friends, he slipped in haste. The town had lately been made the site of one of the Company's chief offices, and the Company's chief engineer was a man of considerable note there. As he was most affably and delightfully unostentatious and modest in all his ways, Treddlestone would have turned genially out of its way to delay him had it known generally that he was there. It was swift, in this day of his success, to remember that his boyhood had been spent just beyond its doors, so to speak.

In a few minutes he had procured a horse, and with the little town twinkling feebly behind him, was scouring the base of the high ground that sheltered it; then the darkness of the great moor to the southward hid him.

A rayless night had fallen. The sea's self was not blacker than the land on either side of this faint

white ribbon of road under his horse's feet. Occasionally overhead the flying clouds broke, and the fleeting, anxious-faced moon peered through for an instant and was swallowed up again.

Todhunter could not conceive that Jessie would have waited, yet the fear of it drove him to urge his flying horse faster and faster. Whether or not —and though he was already hopelessly late—he would not arrive at the trysting place one moment later than his adverse fortune compelled him.

The horse knew that road, and knew that his quiet rider knew it; and down in the hollows, and round long shadowy curves where the heath encroached, his hoof beats rang deep and steady, without hesitating. Familiar points looming out of the clear gloom and speeding past, brought back to Todhunter the memory of his vision. He shook it from him as nonsense. Out here in the night, with the storm winds whistling past his ears, and a swift horse under him, he was awake at least; and he was too healthy minded at all times to regard the unaccountable vagaries of dreams.

As he sped past the point in the road, nearest to which lay the old ruins of the hills, a single scorn-

ful grunt was his comment on his folly of the afternoon. Dead, and wide, and innocent was the heath. There was not and never had been any sinister sign or sense to disturb the peace of mind of an honest lover. If Jessie had been there to-day, would he not have felt it now? Why, indeed, should she have been there, since it was not the place of rendezvous?

To the rendezvous, however, after an hour's hard riding, he came at last, and drawing rein, cantered over and rode once around it. It lay a little off from the road, and was nothing but a couple of large gray boulders whose stony tops leaned together as though for mutual support in their old age of centuries. Jessie was gone, of course. What a fool he had been to fancy she would remain! Smiling, and with his last care gone, he returned to the road and broke into the gallop homeward.

Soon beside the road a motionless figure rose, silently awaiting him. There was no need to inquire its identity. Anywhere in the world he would have recognized and hailed it. It was Luke's; and he hailed the traveler with sarcastic gayety.

Said he: "You come so unawares on one, Tod.

The soft pitpat of your steed's little feet doesn't carry any further than from Treddlestone."

Todhunter laughed and leaped to the ground, and the hands of the two grasped each other. Darkness hid their faces, but Luke's embrace was constrained, and his hand somewhat coolly and quickly withdrawn from Todhunter's.

"Charge of the Light Brigade! It was good of you to come up here to meet me, Luke, and it's good to be home again. How's everybody?"

"Everybody's quite well, thanks. I can't say I came up here to meet you, exactly. I had given you up. Train was late, I suppose."

"Yes. Accident—not to us, but the train ahead, and they kept us for two mortal hours! Was anybody—I mean *you* weren't worried over me, I suppose?" There was an inflection in the voice which Luke noted and resented.

"Not in the least. You always had a particularly good knack of taking care of yourself, you know. Lately I've observed that it's been developing quite abnormally."

Todhunter, leading his horse, walked down the middle of the roadway, while Luke kept to the side.

Todhunter was not insensible to his friend's coolness and irritability, but Luke had his moods at times like all other men. One must be patient with a friend.

"As you didn't come to meet me, you came up for the air, I suppose?" he said whimsically.

"Not that either. If you must know, I came to persuade Jessie to go home. I saw her setting off up here hours ago; and I found her at last, behind there. She was wet and she'd been crying—God knows what for."

The voice was harsh and passionate. Perhaps it was that which made Luke appear younger and smaller than he was. Todhunter's head was thoughtfully bent, revolving—who knows what sudden thoughts? Yet some illusory trick of the night and the storm, of the wide empty spaces around them—or perhaps of something different—caused the disparity in stature of the two men to be suddenly exaggerated.

"She had been crying, then?" Todhunter's voice, low and shaken, seemed scarcely to address his friend, but Luke's ears were keen to-night.

"I'm a little late, I believe, but I congratulate you," he said slowly.

It was the coldest, most distant, cutting accent—the same which aristocratic Luke Lyttle kept for his enemies, such few as he had. Never in all their years of closely knit love had he used it to Todhunter. That friend turned very swiftly, and through a momentary break in the clouds a troubled moonbeam broke, illuminating Luke's handsome, darkly pale face. Todhunter's arm fell across his shoulders as in the old days.

"Luke?"

Face to face, while the dying moonbeam passed, they stood—two friends whom a great dark gulf parted. The ugly face and the strong gray eyes held Luke's jealous smaller soul in a spell.

"Don't speak to me like that, Luke; this development is the misfortune of my life."

Luke flinched, stood irresolute, and wheeled sharply aside—the old, dear habit of boyhood tugging at him. What rights had he in this matter? Not even the honest right to think of the girl they both loved. Not even the right to be madly, furiously, insensately jealous, as he was since he had

seen her tears and known whom she was awaiting in that place. Every high impulse his debonair soul had known and been proud to bend to was calling shame to him, stinging him. Todhunter had long since taken his arm to himself, and the stricken silence of the friend whom Luke had thought to hate gave the last blow to the conflict in the cavalier's soul. He burst forth in rapid, angry, boyish apology.

"I'm a beast, Tod. I'm a cad to interfere like this. Why haven't you knocked me down for it? Couldn't you see I waited up here to be as devilish mean to you as I could? If I'd been in your place, and you'd had the impudence to interfere with me so, I'd have shot you."

"No, you wouldn't. You'd have been as I am—too damned sorry," was the low rejoinder.

"God knows I believe I've gone mad. I was a gentleman once—before this came. You might as well know about it. I didn't know you were engaged to her—you didn't tell me—and one night I spoke to her."

A hurried, bitter laugh emphasized Luke's recollection of the moment.

"Oh, you're fortunate, Tod, I tell you, *most* fortunate. I never had a chance beside you. Why, when I had learned the facts, and presented my apology, and my humble kind wishes to you both, she told me to my face you were immeasurably superior to me. *Immeasurably.* Congratulate yourself, man. Doesn't that satisfy you?"

"Did she say that?" Todhunter asked in the same low voice.

"Say it? No! She flung it in my face, as if what I'd just said had been an insult. And to-night when I found her up here at dark, crying about you, she wouldn't allow me even to walk back beside Pawnee. I swear I was only friendly and gentlemanly. But she said she had your horse, *thanks*—and left me there. Even your horse was to be preferred, it appears, as an escort."

The pace of both men had quickened. That voluntary, honestly boyish humiliation of Luke's, as it strove to make amends to the old friendship, was generous, and as it was made to a successful rival, was magnanimous surely, but the bitterness of it was for both. To no other man than Todhunter would Luke Lyttle have so humbled himself; yet

that knowledge did not heal the breach at all, for every word with which he whipped himself was a separate castigation to the silent ears that heard.

Todhunter had said very little. Yet jealousy scorched him as it would any other man because his lady whom he worshiped had been made love to in his absence. That the man who had done it was Luke Lyttle, his friend, only served to make the sting double headed and fiercer. And the poison in which both the rankling barbs were alike dipped was the memory of Jessie's face as he had seen it in his vision. What was the reason of her sadness? The question sickened him, and stung him into reproach.

"I've been gone only ten days. At least you knew what my sentiments were about her. You might have been less precipitate, Luke."

"I know. I meant to have waited till you got back. I never meant—I swear I hadn't the least intention of—Dash the talk!" the irritated cavalier expostulated; "Where's the use of explaining a thing like that? There are some things won't bear explaining." He turned aside slowly, but coldly, and began to make his way downward. "I'll leave

you; I'm going down this way. Your path and mine, Tod, I reckon, had best lie apart after this."

Todhunter stood in the windy darkness looking after that lost friend. His voice was husky, but no tremor could mar its own invincible and commanding gentleness, and the storm carried it as far as necessary. "Luke, shake hands with me first—for the old days' sake, lad."

And Luke turned as he had been always wont to do when Todhunter called. Across the dark hill crest their hands silently grasped each other, and the thought of the old days in each enveloped them once more with the old tenderness. The troubled moon shone out as the cavalier glanced upwards. "Good luck—good luck! You know I wish you the finest luck in the world, old fellow," he said huskily, "and—damn your ugly face, Tod—you know I'll never get over the trick of loving it."

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Todhunter followed the road. Beneath him, lights a-twinkle, lay Staley Crags, that "home" he had ridden so far and fast to reach, and been so joyous at regaining, and where Jessie lived. In the centre, like a heart from whence all those lesser

lights drew sustenance, the lights of Mr. Lyttle's house gleamed, drawing Todhunter's eyes to them, as he came round the bend, as the harbor lights of home draw weary ships.

The gravity of his face was deep and sore. All his life long those windows had gleamed for him all that he knew of home and welcome. They sheltered Jessie, who was to be his wife. Jessie, who had cost him Luke! For the man's thoughts at this moment were for his friend. Luke and he! Had there ever been a time when it was not so? Closer and dearer than the lives of brothers had their lives been. And now that bosom friend walked on the hillside estranged, and the windows of his father's house were gleaming distant and unfriendly upon him, Todhunter.

Swiftly arose one intense and bewildering desire —to see his sweetheart. His heart, with all its deadly hurt, was turning to her, crying for her love. As he rode there, large and grave, and obscured by darkness from the hundred blinking eyes on the hill, his stress of emotion only invested him with dignity—the unconscious and pitiable dignity with which the strongest protect their grief. He was

going to see Jessie; he felt that he must see her to-night at all hazards, but he went very slowly,—because of Luke. Grief is before everything else decent toward its object.

It was this Todhunter whom a most mischievous fate decreed should be waylaid by two half drunken, jovial, but aggrieved financiers.

Passing, on the corner of the only street, the little shop which did duty for postoffice, he stopped, not troubling to dismount, and knocked with his hand on the window for his letters. Half a dozen men lounged out into the wind. To most of them he stood almost in the place of employer; so, having silently greeted him, they stood about and watched with empty interest while his letters were delivered. There were about a score of these, chiefly communications and reports from mines under his charge, and a few orders from the Company; for he was its chief engineer and he had been absent for ten days.

Todhunter pocketed them all indifferently. He had a kind word for the child who had come out and handed them up to him, its little arms outstretched; but to all the rest he nodded once com-

prehensively, and rode away from that busy centre into the night.

To their dull, uninterested eyes he had looked weary. They remarked that the chief was tired after his London trip, and that it was a wild night above on the moor. Having said so, all but two of them went back out of the storm to the warmth and gossip of the shop, and the sociable beer which made those things the more enjoyable.

Within the scheming heads of Corin and Pike, who had already had much beer, the same happy notion had at the same instant alighted. Corin said that the weariness of their foe was simply anxiety; and when their neighbors had gone indoors he and Pike slouched down the road together. That they went cautiously and kept close together was, they agreed, only because it was best to make quite sure in a matter like this.

Todhunter turned aside from the road by a path that led upwards to his own house. The heavy feet of a pair of men whom he had heard on the road behind him turned also, and it occurred to him in his troubled preoccupation that perhaps they wished to speak with him. Swinging sideways in the sad-

dle, he waited for them to come up. Any hunter might be excused for feeling nonplussed on discovering his quarry calmly waiting for him to arrive; and Corin and Pike, as they perceived the mounted figure silently barring the track, felt so, and stopped short simultaneously.

"You wanted to speak to me?" Todhunter inquired.

There is a kind of question which, if one has anything especially delicate and painful to say, confronts one like a wall of brass, presenting on its shiny surface not a stray nick to put the toe in and climb over by. Todhunter's question was grave and polite—and that kind. These insects that had intruded under his feet he would have brushed aside; they must not be trodden on, if possible to avoid it.

"Us just came, in a way, to see how you wor," Corin said, feeling the pause growing too long.

Todhunter turned a little further in the saddle. "That's thoughtful of you," said his gentlest voice. "You see how I am—very well. Why, friend?"

It was plain to Pike that things were not going the right way.

"Us be *real* friends of yours, Tod. We doan't

bear 'ee no malice at all," he explained, hoping every one would gather the same comfort from the fact that he did.

"Because I didn't turn you both over to the Excise authorities for a pair of rogues, I suppose?" Todhunter assented, dryly. "Well, my friends, and what do you want? Out with it, Corin!"

Not thus had the scheme of the two cronies worked out in rehearsal. With that big, dark, overshadowing engineer's part in—rendered by himself—it was somehow different, less simple.

They had lost their cue. But with Todhunter's eye on him Corin felt obliged to proceed.

" 'Tis the will of God," he said piously, "that some men be born ugly into this world, an' some pretty, though some do say as it be more the fault of the mothers. Anyway, in such way as a babby do come into the world, so he do stay, an' 'tis a tur'uble handicap to him with the women at times—after he'm growed an' be lookin' round for a wife. An' so me an' Pike consequently—"

So far, so good. There was no harm as yet, for both the cronies heard a very low but distinct laugh from the figure on horseback. Corin expanded a

little. He was just drunk enough to be stately, and enjoy it.

"Women be just like children in some ways, though again there be times when they'm the deceitfulest creatures made. They judge a man by the outside of him, same as an apple, forgettin' that things as be white inside doan't need no white paint to make 'em so. Many an ugly gert chap would look better if he could turn himself inside out, so to speak. Me an' Pike never had no trouble of the sort, both bein' tidy chaps for looks, but not marryin' men. Not Pike, at least, though I comed near marryin' a woman once. But we know how 'tis; an' we have a deal of sympathy for lovers. An' so we'm come to tell 'ee. We doan't like to see a man's girl turn from him cause he bain't so handsome outside as some. We'm poor an' honest, an' the times be tur'uble hard for poor men. Bain't that so, Pike?"

"Ess. A poor man have got no chance at all," Pike assented.

There came a whispered imprecation, "The devil!"

The engineer had shifted his position slightly,

and was looking along the hillside at the spot where the windows of Mr. Lyttle's house glowed. That was where his girl lived, and the man who was his friend, Master Luke Lyttle. At this evidence of proper feeling in the man, Corin's sympathies grew actually akin to those of an artist with his handiwork.

"Hold on a minute," said Todhunter quietly. Corin involuntarily stopped in the middle of a syllable. "If you don't mind I'll get down from here. I don't hear you as well as I want to, on account of the wind, and this is interesting to me—very interesting indeed." As Todhunter alighted the three were bunched very closely together and he laid a constraining hand gently on a shoulder of each of them, drawing them still closer. "Now I can hear you better. It's a black night, isn't it? Black enough for the murder of all false lovers and sham friends. Go on, honest men."

They could look up now and discern his face bent slightly downward—he was so close. How steadfastly and quietly it was turned toward the lights of the Lyttle home. He seemed almost to listen to a sound from thence. His hands on their shoulders

were very light, but they grasped. He said, as Corin hesitated—"Go on. By God, I'm going to hear the end of that story."

"You bain't goin' to kill Master Lyttle, surely."

"Go on!"

"But we be poor men—"

"Get on, will you? I'll give you something for your trouble presently."

"Ess. Well, then, doan't 'ee fly in a passion. One night we seed Master Lyttle an' your girl—Stop! You'm hurtin' my shoulder cruel."

"Whenever you wish to speak of that lady," came the stern whisper, "call her Miss Dunham. Now go on."

"Well, then—but le'go my shoulder, do. You hurt me bad; you'm so fierce to me. We seed them walkin' together one night like two lovers—didn't us, Pike? Master Lyttle he pulled a flower an' gived it her like she wor an angel comed down out of heaven, an' him the king of England. Her said 'no,' an' laughed, an' wouldn't take en from him—an'—an'—" there seemed a hitch here—"then Master Lyttle kissed it an' gived it her again, an' she took it." Corin's imagination was spurred by the

desire to make a good story. "In a minute Master Lyttle put his arms round her an' kissed her too. Me an' Pike seed it—diden' us, Pike?"

Pike assented—in doubt. The grip on his shoulder seemed to be turning to iron.

"So much the worse for Pike and you. You swine—you dull beasts—do you think the mud you throw at the moon can soil her? Whether you've somehow caught hold of the stray end of a sad truth, or whether the whole tale is the offscouring of your filthy mouths, the Almighty Lord knows, and I'll know too in time. I'm glad you've come. If I murdered you there isn't a nerve in your bodies that could suffer what two, maybe three, are suffering this night without any help of yours. Times are hard, you said. You honest jackals, I'll pay you."

And he did. Catching their stupid, lying heads he cracked them mercilessly together, and lifting the pair of baffled rascals in his furious quiet hands flung them from him. Grunts told where they alighted. Then he stood, dark and contemptuous beside his horse and waited for them to come again. They came rushing, with murder in their deep gut-

tural, panting breaths—Corin with knife uplifted. They would have killed him that instant if they had reached him, or if he had been less swift and terrible in his self-defense. Fierce as lightning flashes his clenched hands met them one by one in the face as they sprang for him, and the shock sent them down to the black hillside like logs.

They were almost under his horse's feet.

"Get up!" he commanded; but they lay still.

"Now do you want any more?"

They did not stir. Unwarily Todhunter bent down, for he knew the blows had been heavy. In a flash Corin was up on his elbow. This defeat was his. Rage had washed all the black villainous sediment in him to the surface, and a torrent of lying, filthy accusation concerning Jessie Dunham sped from his lips as he stabbed with all his strength at the victor.

He should have aimed better. Only the words seemed to have struck. In wrathful silence Todhunter wrenched him up, shaking him as an infuriated Newfoundland might shake a puppy, and sweeping up a handful of the path, forced it irresistibly between the ungodly lips that had dared.

"You ought to have your neck broken. Take that to clean your mouth with instead," he said. "Now you and Pike get home, and don't come in my way again just at present." When his foot was in the stirrup he turned again. "If either of you happens to have any more of those stories for sale any time, just draw on me for them."

He disappeared, leaving Corin and Pike to their blasphemies, and, as he went, wrapping his handkerchief about his wrist; for Corin's knife had slashed it badly. He felt the better for his encounter. But the need to see Jessie had become more urgent than ever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JESSIE'S UNCERTAINTY.

He rode up the incline to his own house, whence gleamed one of the many lights of the hillside. Dismounting he entered the unlocked door, leaving his horse standing, for he intended remaining only long enough to remove as well as he could all evidences of his recent doings.

It was silent within. Ancient Mrs. Bell always went to bed with the birds. The house had been designed by its owner, and the rooms through which he passed with a master's step were, like himself, large but meagrely furnished as most bachelor quarters. To the one whence the light proceeded he went. It served him as part office, part study; but besides his desk and business papers and many books, other personal belongings lay all about in profusion.

While he hastily removed the traces of his journey and roughly bound up his gashed wrist, which

bled freely, he discovered a letter addressed to himself lying on his table. Opening it, he found it was a short note from the preacher.

The writer said that he had been forced to go on a sudden journey; that he regretted greatly having to leave while his host was absent, but that in a day or two at most he would return to present his thanks for the hospitality which had allowed him, a mere stranger, to trespass so long.

"Signs himself 'the preacher,' and is coming back to this extremity of the earth merely to thank me," mused Todhunter, laying the sheet down, and in the preoccupation of his own affairs quickly forgetting it.

Around his window the wind moaned, bringing with it clearly and suddenly a short sharp beating sound from the road. "That's Pawnee now," he said hurriedly, listening. Next moment he had mounted and was gone. At the bottom of the path, speeding in response to he knew not what premonition, he slacked rein, calling aloud to the horse that was coming.

The rider, clad in white, seemed as they came together to stretch out her arms. Todhunter caught

her swiftly and upbore her with tender violence from her saddle to his own, and both horses stood still, unbidden.

She had not even a hat on. Her hair was blown across his face and into his eyes, almost blinding him before he took time at last to smooth it back with great, loving, eager hands, whispering in his delight, "My dear love—my dear, dear little girl, why did you do it? I was coming to you. Didn't you know I would come?"

But Jessie only cried "Tod," clinging to him, shielding her face half-heartedly from his caresses. So for that moment, while her hands were clasped about his neck, he almost forgot the wounds which life had endeavored to deal him to-day.

She would not allow him to ask her questions as yet; nor did she wish to ask them of him. In his true, steady, unfaltering presence questions vanished. There had been a question—how she had fought it, and thrust it back into the furthest corner of her soul, piling contempt, fear, anger, haughty looks upon it! But with his arms about her—lo, it seemed to utterly vanish.

"Tod, you're squeezing the breath from me,"

she whispered. "Oh, my dear—hold me tight. Hold me against all comers to the end of the world." And he swore—"To the end of the world and into heaven." But those words of hers had brought the darkness into the horizon again.

He told her in few glowing words of the prospect that had opened for him, and what he hoped of it. But it was on the other side of the world, and it was asking much of her to leave all her friends behind and go with him to such a distance. In return he would endeavor to be to her all that a man could be, and would forever love and protect and cherish her. Did she think she could do it?

She answered, laughing at his doubt, and with an eager tremor in her voice, that she would go anywhere with him. She would gladly leave England, for of late it had grown so wearisome to her she almost hoped never to see it again. Even Staley Crags, which she had so loved at first, had become—with him absent—almost hateful; and as his absences would have to be so frequent if they remained there, she feared she would never be anything else than unhappy in the place.

Jessie was fighting off the spectral question

again, innocently supposing that he could never divine its existence. As he listened the darkness crept down further upon him. Then carefully but with fatal directness he laid his finger close to the question.

"Jessie, how did you know I was coming, dear? Was it Luke who told you?" he asked.

The unexpectedness of the inquiry made her stammer. He heard, and his heart went down hopelessly.

"Yes—he told me," she said. "He came in just now. He knew I went to meet you. Tod, he knows about us," she broke out nervously. "I had to tell him one night. We—he, that is—"

But Todhunter seemed not to perceive her embarrassment. In her stricken pause his arm only drew her a little closer, as though to console her, and he relieved her of speech.

"We met up above. Luke told me that story," he said, with a queer reserve in his voice. "You know he was my friend, dear, and we had a talk. You wouldn't understand what a strange talk it was for Luke and me. Oh—my girl—" He gathered her up jealously. The darkness could not

hide her from his questioning eyes, nor from the force and pain and bridled passion of his lips. Then he said quietly, "Shall I put you back on Pawnee now, Jessie?"

She did not answer, but clung to him passionately, refusing to be put away—understanding instantly that he had seen her confusion and read its meaning.

"But I want to talk common sense to you," he said, deeply troubled, "and I cannot with you so close to me. I want to talk to you about Luke, dear."

He felt her whole body shrink, and knew by that how sensitive the point must be. Swiftly and imperiously she laid her hand against his lips with a low stifled sob, "No, no, Tod." But he took it very gently down.

"I must speak about that story Luke told me. Don't cry, darling—there's no one to blame. Luke's a capital handsome old fellow. I don't forget that you hadn't seen him when you engaged yourself to me. Do you like him much, Jessie?"

"Yes—but that's nothing. I like you much better, Tod—indeed I do. Oh, do stop."

"Yes, dear." Her tears were flowing; he would not torment her with further questions. There was one that he must have an answer to, but he gave her time. Presently he asked it.

"Jessie, look at me one minute. I promise not to worry you any longer. If I hadn't—if there was nothing to interfere between you and Luke—could you like him as well as he likes you?"

It was the very core of the terrible question which he had uncovered. Knowing that he wanted her honesty, Jessie gave it to him, as far as she knew it, in a brave trembling whisper, often broken.

"When you were away I did think sometimes—that—perhaps I could— and it made me utterly wretched. But now that you're back—oh, can't you see it's all different? Don't shame me, Tod! It's you—I don't believe it was ever anyone else but you."

He soothed her grief with his hands, whispering, "I shame you, dear?—Hush!"

A long pause followed. It was not a very satisfactory position for a lover whom business at pres-

ent called away three days in every week. Somehow he must see her heart more plainly.

When he spoke again Jessie checked her grief in amazement. The voice she had loved for its most gentle strength was changed. It was so deliberately stern and censorious now that she might have suspected its naturalness, but that the words astonished and so strangely stung her.

"There are so many grounds on which a man may lay good claim to consideration: ability, accomplishment of his ambition, honesty, honor. This man we've been speaking of—what has he? He will never set the Thames on fire, Jessie."

"Oh, Tod," she cried miserably, and stirred reproachfully against his arm. Jealousy was making him unjust and untrue to Luke Lyttle. Even she knew these things were not so.

The pause lengthened as though he waited for her to continue, but she did not. When he hesitated strangely on his words she thought it was anger; but it might have been difficulty in bringing them forth.

"Leave out his ability, and whatever he has accomplished by it; a man can't very well help the

absence of qualities he's born without. What of his honor and his honesty? He was a friend of mine, and I know what I'm talking about. I doubt very much if he knows the meaning of either."

The girl raised her head from his shoulder with a sharp wrench, and peered anxiously at his face. She could not see its expression, for he sat erect and it was high above her. "Oh," she cried warmly. "How can you speak so of him? He is no fool, and you know it. And at least he is a gentleman and knows the meaning of those things quite as well as you do."

Her hair no longer lay beneath Todhunter's cheek. She sat erect, indignant, wondering at him. Again she heard only the words. Yet they came so slowly that it seemed as if some iron sledge hammer of purpose must be driving them out.

"He was a false friend. Is that honesty? Does honor tell a man to go behind his friend's back, and scheme and plot to steal away the heart of his friend's sweetheart? He deliberately used his personal fascinations—which I understand are great —to draw her away. Doubtless he mocked and insinuated; men of his stamp would not hesitate at—"

"Set me on Pawnee, please," said the girl in a chill voice, "—and take your arm away, if you please. We live to learn and regret, it seems. I'm a friend of Luke Lyttle's—that at the very least—and no one shall say those things of him in my hearing. I refused to listen to him the other night —when he wanted me to be more—for your sake. *For your sake!* You might as well know it. I thought you so different, oh so different, from what you are. I can hardly believe yet—" Jessie's voice dropped quaveringly, but she picked it up indignantly and rushed on. *"He* plot and scheme behind your back, and mock and insinuate? He is as incapable of that as you are of appreciating what such a man as he is. I'll tell you what he said behind your back. When he knew—when I told him that—that I—you know what I refer to; when he knew of it he only said, like the clean-hearted gentleman he is, "Tod's a splendid fellow, Jessie—a thousand times better than I am." He said that, and he meant it. And I—Heavens, I actually believed him."

Low, clear, and maddeningly scornful her laugh arose—and suddenly died midway. Todhunter had

dismounted and stood beside her, ready to lift her to her own horse; and her angry heart stood still, smitten by a vague terrible pain she scarcely understood the meaning of. Just so he had stood that day—that misty day on the sea road when he was her newly-accepted lover. Why did he look so like that now? Why, in spite of the calumnies he had cast on the name of friendship, was the set of his tall dark massive head so noble, so altogether the picture of what he had always seemed to her? And both her hands were clasped helplessly in his.

He was whispering something.

"Jessie, dear, you were so easily imposed upon. For that I must ask your forgiveness; Luke would have known me better. It was imperative to make certain where I stood, for my business will take me away from here three days in every week, from now—until I leave. You see I had to know how safe I was. You didn't know yourself what your real feeling for Luke was, dear. I was forced to discover it for both of us."

She looked at him, stricken. Memory was late, but she seemed to recall now the slow halting speech and the strained voice.

"You didn't mean those things, Tod? You've been imposing on me? And I've said things to you ——oh, what have I said?" she whispered. Her heart stood still, and the whisper died away as she remembered.

They looked speechlessly into each other's darkened faces. He had a terrible wistful hope that she had not meant all—that she would still be able to retract or explain the worst. But her silence was utter distress and misery and shame because she could not.

He realized it in a moment, and spoke of something else. Evidently he was hurt to the quick.

"Little woman, in my hands Luke Lyttle's name and reputation and all things that concern him are as safe, and almost as dear, as yours. Ask him some day." Then he lifted her and set her on Pawnee and walked beside her.

They came to Mr. Lyttle's house, but he said he would not enter with her. He had letters and much business to attend to, and he must start away down the coast early in the morning. Each knew it was because of Luke that he would not enter, but neither mentioned it; and neither said anything of the ship-

wreck of their love that lay down the dark road behind them. As he lifted her down once more she felt a sticky wetness of his wrist. A cloth had been bound round it but had slipped, and his cuff and shirt sleeve were wet with blood. A wild suspicion crossed Jessie's mind.

"Tod, you never told me," she faltered. "It wasn't—you and Luke didn't—Oh, Tod, surely—"

Todhunter laughed shakily as he disengaged his hand from her fingers. "Luke?—of course not. It's a mere scratch, Jessie. I got it from a couple of hungry jackals up above there."

"There are no jackals in England, Tod," she cried distressfully. "Tell me the truth."

"Why, yes there are—a few. Human jackals, Jessie—low beasts. I caught these two trying to fatten themselves at the expense of a couple of friends of mine, and I spoiled their appetites. That nip doesn't amount to a row of pins, dear, truly."

He bent swiftly before her as she stood mystified in her white dress with the house light falling on her—raised her hand fervently to his lips, and with that cold salute was gone.

* * * * * * * * *

She saw as she entered the wide quiet hall of house, beside a leaping fire which he had irritably kicked into brilliance with his foot, the cavalier standing restlessly—turning over the leaves of books he saw nothing of, endeavoring to banish his thoughts. It was he who—finding her there alone an hour ago—had given her the news which he knew would send her forth to Todhunter.

She came in, slender and cold and white—her eyes half blind and brilliant with tears, her hair falling on her neck from the wind and that embrace she had desired to be freed from. Over her bosom a little red, unconscious rose hung withering. Dropping his book with an exclamation, Luke crossed the hall and came swiftly toward her.

But she saw him coming, and shrank, stretching out her hand beseechingly against him, crying, "No, no, Luke—not you. Oh, not you!" and, sweeping her white gown clear of her feet she fled desperately from him up the stairs as if he had been a spirit.

And Luke stood where he was, transfixed as the traveler stands when the lightning bolt that has cleft midnight falls at his feet and reveals him on

the brink of an unsuspected heaven or hell. Long after she was gone the cavalier turned unsteadily and flung himself into a seat, and drawing his hand across his eyes looked for a long time between his fingers at the dancing flames. He sat there till midnight; and when he rose it seemed as though all the dead flames of the fire had been absorbed into his dark handsome eyes and were glowing there.

Extinguishing the lights and drawing back the curtain of a small window facing up the valley, he stood looking from the darkness within the room on that of the world without.

"The fortunes of war, old Tod," he murmured with triumph irrepressible. "It looks as though my turn may be coming to say, with all apologies to you, 'I'm damned sorry.' "

CHAPTER XIX.

AT BUNDLE'S GRAVE.

Night was past as Todhunter rode slowly around the bend of the highway emerging from the valley to the windy uplands. Morning had opened her deep slow eyes upon the world, and all along the dark hilltops of the inland country was shaking out her tresses of pure light. Golden tresses—dreaming, misty, disheveled—like those of a fair woman rousing from sleep. Todhunter's eyes were upon them as he rode.

He turned in the saddle ere he passed beyond view of the valley, and looked backward. The storm seemed to be over. There was a window in the Lyttle's house which he knew would catch the dawn early; he had watched it on other mornings and afterwards ridden all day with the thought of it in his heart.

Slowly, with the chilly faithfulness of inanimate things, it pointed a long, dreaming, golden finger

of light straight up the valley after him. The brilliance of it made his eyes sting, for this morning they were weary with sleeplessness. He turned away, shaking the reins, and looked backward no more while his horse carried him at a gallop past the bluff.

Out on the moors, with the glen sunk low behind, there was no further need of haste. Love went back traitorously and jealously to that bright window in the valley, into which the mounting sun shone—behind which Jessie lay sleeping. How soon would she awake? How old would the day be before she and Luke would find each other—and Luke his friend, discover for himself what he, her lover, knew?

Under the sting of that speculation Todhunter writhed in helpless misery. The torment of it dried him up. Luke would sue again—to-day—to-morrow. Jessie would not turn away. His arms would hold her close. Baleful imagination supplied all the details of the picture. Todhunter's strong hands twitched; one of them could so easily strangle the life out of a man. He tore his mind from that line of thought lest it madden him.

Clear morning brought out pitilessly what the charitable gray dawn had partly hidden. That handsome and beautiful physique, which no physical endurance could weaken, had suffered strain in this night. Wearily the man bestrode his horse, which traveled leisurely at its own pace. Both loomed large on the cliff edge, between the morning light and that dark heaving waste whose billows tossed for ever into the west and night. Todhunter's sunk gray eyes followed them. In that beyond there might be forgetfulness. In that infinite which hung illimitable above the most distant crest, a man's soul might expand and shake itself free of clinging memories and hopeless passions. Out there was space and largeness enough. Vaguely his soul must have been touched by some hand that reached mercifully out from the Great Infinity itself; for violence and hate fell back to those obscure depths in him that alone knew them. Only the man's love remained, wounded and bleeding, but perhaps even more beautiful for that.

"It's best so, I reckon," he said—only the winds and the Spirit of God heard the slow words. "Who am I to stand in the way of their happiness? I've

had my day, and I think—I think she did love me a little. For that let me be eternally grateful. I never expected so much once. She'll be happy. I wasn't mistaken last night. And there's Luke—" Groaning he broke off abruptly. A lover to wish to any other man the happiness his own arms were emptied of!

Jealousy, the vulture, swooped down on him again and tore him cruelly. But he triumphed after a little. When he resumed once more his voice trembled musically. For now the sweetness of the old friendship, victorious, was claiming expression from him.

"Luke's the right kind. Who should know that better than I? He's a fine honorable fellow, old Luke is. Lots of the real blue blood, and an old name to give her. She'll never be ashamed of him. It looks almost as though they were made for each other, and I've been trying to keep them apart. God knows—" he breathed hurriedly, looking out to sea, "I wouldn't relinquish my rights for anything less than her happiness, but since I have to do it, Luke's the best. He's best."

He took off his hat that the wind might blow

freely on his forehead and thick dark hair. This last victory had been a tremendous effort.

Above a frowning gray promontory of rocks a cloud of gulls arose on the wind, battling with their wings, swooping, screaming in hoarse ecstacy. It was a favorite nesting place of the birds. Todhunter's eyes followed them, and he was reminded.

"We never came down here—Jessie and I. Bundle's buried just over there. I meant to have brought her to see the place. She remembers Bundle—old dog. Luke and I were bound up in that, too. Queer how we've been bound up together in everything all our lives. It wasn't nature that we could escape each other in a matter like this—loving the same woman. No one's fault though; she was made to be loved. We must try to stop thinking about that."

Almost involuntarily his hand on the rein altered the course. They traveled slightly to the left, a little off from the sea, and came to the spot under the lee of a pile of gray rocks that might once have been an ancient watch tower. Here Bundle slept, forgetful of his master's whistle, his doggish hunger and pains, and the drawbacks of his mongrel

birth. It was such a humble little mound, half buried in blooming gorse planted by the loving hands of the two boys who had laid him there. That tall gray-eyed master whom he had so devotedly loved dismounted and stood above him, but Bundle's little ears no longer pricked forward.

"Old doggie—they were good days while they lasted; and we were the best of friends—weren't we?" the master said huskily. "You were the best friend, according to your lights, I ever had. Still —we must be just. I never put you to the supreme test of requiring your bones or your dinner. If I had, little friend, you'd have been justified in objecting, too."

He parted the wild yellow growth tenderly to mark the head and foot, and sat down beside the humble little resting place. There was so much time to be killed. He buried his forehead in his well hand. His sweetheart's face, in all its purity and beauty, danced persistently on his aching retina—but Luke was always in the background. The pain was maddening.

The old moor and its wild things, which all his life he had known and loved, arose around him

with soft faint stirrings, murmurous with their thousand tiny voices, breathing their incense into his nostrils to heal his hurt—which one touch of Jessie's hand might have found, if she had wished and had loved him well enough, and healed forever.

As he sat, there came past the place an innocent roysterer on four feet, who knew nothing personally as yet of sorrow. All he knew of this great bowed lonely figure he suddenly came upon was that it had lately imprisoned him much against his will and carried him whither he would not. Friendliness, however, was the chief excess of the roysterer's life, and he crawled on his stomach as his nature prompted him to do, and licked the slack hand of the man. Then at that hand's unexpected start, that callow nosed puppy Bundle the Second rolled over instantly upon his clumsy back, imploring pardon with all four feet frantically uplifted.

Todhunter laid his hand on the silky brown head.

"Why, you funny little tramp; you must have been out all night. Where's Jan?"

The roysterer did not say, but understanding immediately the presence of some matter that could not be mentioned between them, gravely arose and

licked the strong dark fingers that could have pinched his life out.

"So much love, Bundle the Second—and all for nothing. Thank you kindly—most kindly. Love is a commodity of which we're feeling rather short at the present moment, doggie."

But at that Jessie's face came back—achingly pure and lovely. Todhunter's head sank upon his hand. He could not choose but look upon her. Over the tops of the low eastern hills the sun's red disk climbed higher and looked down upon him. And then Jan came.

The boy flung himself with a breathless cry upon his idol. Whatever sweetheart, or friend, or the world might think of Todhunter, there was no doubt of what Jan thought. He touched the man's bandaged wrist with his mute inquiring fingers, crying loving, eager, inarticulate little sounds of compassion; then looking up into the strong quiet ugly face with its pitifully steady gray eyes, read as a dog would the trouble engraved thereon. He stood very still, laying his small hand upon his friend's large one, and communed with him from that silent realm which he knew best.

Such wealth of unasking affection was exactly the tonic his friend needed. That largeness in Todhunter, which owned the claim of every weak and unfortunate thing, awoke. He put his arm round the boy, and quietly drew him closer.

"Little Jan—little dumb friend—" was all he said at first.

Then very slowly—in mere fragments of speech as the thoughts came to him—he began to talk to the boy. As on that memorable night when they had communed together first, Jan was silent. He only knew that his friend talked; while the man poured out his sore heart into those little ears that heard not.

"Little dumb Jan, there's so much selfishness in love as we mortals know it. Perfect love is as high above us as the sky, and as unattainable.—You've come nearer to it than I have.—You, little friend, love me for no reason, and ask nothing in return. You just love—as the tide flows, and the rain falls, and the blue sky bends over both. That, too, in spite of the fact that I neglect you."

"—Love is gold. But the mean clay we men mix it with needs a lot of refining before we get at

the real, pure, beautiful metal. That refining is a painful business, Jan. You don't understand now, but you may some day, poor dumb little lad. May God pity you then, and send you friends."

"—I thought my love for her was as high and pure as the Great White Throne itself. But there's a higher, and I can't come to it. To love a woman's happiness to the point that you're willing another man should give it to her—that's a height for gods only. Before a man can reach it he has to be burnt up."

Jan's hand clasped the strong hand which encircled and half supported him. He knew nothing of words. But while he felt the vibrations of that musical, deep shaken voice beside his face, and saw the lips move, he was content. Jan's conception of heaven would have been something similar to this. The brown clumsy puppy rolled at their feet, and the sunlight grew white behind their heads; their faces were toward the infinite space beyond the waters, where it might be that the Perfect Love knew fulfillment.

"But we can say 'God bless her.' God bless them both, for they are very dear to me. For me there's

the wide world—thank fortune my place in it will be the antipodes—and an ambition as empty as a blind nut, with nobody to share it. For thee, little Jan, I think there's a chance of speech. We'll see if we can't send you to school and give you a chance to do something with your life. You've plenty of intelligence, I'm convinced; one needn't go beyond those eyes to see that. You'll be taught to talk and communicate with your kind, and then perhaps we'll learn a few of the thoughts that must be germinating in that silent brain of yours, all locked in and hermetically sealed. Poor little weed!" Todhunter paused and laid his hand on the boy's head. "Yes, we'll do that. It will be one tie to old England for me; there won't be many. Little lad—I was a weed like you once, and if a certain kind and beneficent hand had not taken hold of me and given me a chance God knows where I'd be to-day."

Jan did not hear. Bundle the Second was the only one who answered, barking at a sea-gull.

"Jan," said Todhunter very tenderly, "we must approach through your eyesight, mustn't we? Here's a brand new shilling I brought you from London—see how the sun shines on it." And this,

and this only, of all his friend's confidence, Jan understood.

When Todhunter mounted again and rode to the south, these two happy little tramps who had made their bed that night in a nook of the hillside, and to whom his presence was so eminently desirable, followed him until he turned them back.

The wind was rising again and commencing to shriek warningly along the coast. Sea and sky had begun to give evidence that the dawn had brought only an interlude in the storm which had begun the previous night.

CHAPTER XX.

WRECKS.

Depressed and pale, Jessie awoke late, and looking out upon an ominous sky line thought dismally of Todhunter and of the night before. She had dreamed many versions of it in fitful snatches of sleep, but none was so painful as the reality. Her eyes were heavy lidded. Grief and apprehension and honest shame at herself had made the night a bad one for her.

She was not a girl who dealt in subterfuges even with herself.

That which Todhunter had uncovered before both their eyes last night she grew crimson and trembled at, but made no attempt to deny. In those few, brief, mad moments before the terrible enlightenment which followed, she had triumphed in it, and in the blows she had dealt him; but now, left alone with it, it had become a wall of brass whose shadow

covered her with humiliation, and frightened and daunted her.

All that was best in her was in love with Todhunter still—oh, yes—that great and dear lover of whom she was a thousand times unworthy—but there was another stratum in her nature that had been, and still was, undeniably attracted by his friend. She stood aghast at her own fickleness. Ten days ago she would not have believed it possible though an angel had foretold it. From such love as that Todhunter had done very well to turn away affronted.

Bitterly she had cried to herself a hundred times that night that she ought to have known him better. *He* to steal in the dark behind any man and strike him in the back? To suspect him of doing this to Luke Lyttle, the man for whom his friendship was a proverb down here! Of all those heavy-footed, slow-witted valley men who worked under him—and down the mine looked to him as dogs to their master, so she had heard—there was not one who would not have understood him better. She had not because—the answer was plain and sent hot fires flying across her cheeks; it was the same

which he had seen and had bowed to—because the depth of her interest in Luke Lyttle had made his defense the paramount and only matter in her mind, and left her blind and deaf to all other considerations.

Once or twice she had grown very angry. There was another phase of the situation which was by no means to be overlooked, and she worked herself into wrathful indignation over it. From first to last the matter was Todhunter's fault altogether. Had he not laid a detestable and cruel snare to catch her off guard? Was that kind and true of him? What right had he to go about deliberately to entrap her into admissions she had never made to herself, even in her most secret moments? Such treatment made her honesty look like duplicity itself—at that very moment when she had so painfully striven to be honest. But at this point the indictment inevitably stopped in distress. Had he not seen the too obvious effort at honesty? Whose fault was it that his manner of unmasking it to herself had been so fatally easy?

His trap had not been artfully and deceitfully covered up. He had set it before her in the plain

light of day—baiting it candidly with her already confessed liking for his friend. And she had fallen into it.

Furthermore—and this matter, which she alone guessed at, hurt her deeply—in her blindness and anger at him at first she had wronged him and perhaps flattered herself a little by jumping to the conclusion that jealousy of Luke was prompting his words. Just how high he stood above that level she had instantly learned, and in proportion as she perceived the clean uprightness of his purpose, and felt his great chivalrous gentleness toward her after she had struck at him so blindly, her sense of self-abasement cruelly deepened.

And yet—after all this—downstairs she would meet Luke Lyttle.

She could think of that still. Because of it she looked in her mirror when she was fully dressed and involuntarily arranged a few touches here and there in her hair, her dress—till, catching herself at it she turned a fierce, burning scarlet, from her bright beautiful hair to her white neck, and stood there looking on herself—convicted, degraded, stricken.

"If Tod were to hang me," she whispered desperately, "I can't deny it. I'm thoroughly—horribly ashamed of myself. I'm not worth one of his thoughts, and yet I want to be—oh, I do want to be." Hurriedly she flicked her handkerchief across her eyes, winking them rapidly as she felt the vicinity of tears. She hissed tragically at her own image. "I may not be as much in love with Tod as he wants me to be, and as I ought to be—but if Luke even addresses me to-day I'm going to cut him dead."

Then, forbidding and lovely, bearing no trace of the conflict in her except her pale face, she proceeded serenely downstairs to breakfast.

She was very late, and Mrs. Lyttle was awaiting her alone. Luke was nowhere in evidence, for which Jessie felt grateful.

Mrs. Lyttle discerned that something was wrong, but she was no busybody. She chatted amiably to fill in her pretty guest's silences.

Once she said:

"Tod must have gone away very early this morning, for he never came near us. I wanted to ask him to bring me things from Bunderport on his

way back. He doesn't usually go off so abruptly."

"Oh, is he gone?" said Jessie. "I remember now he said something to me about going off early this morning." She grew faintly red again. "You know I saw him last night for a very few minutes."

"Did you?" said the lady. In her heart she added, "—and you quarreled desperately with him, and now you're as desperately sorry for it. Anyone who could quarrel with such a fellow as he is deserves to be sorry."

Aloud she said: "I think you're going to see a big storm to-day or to-morrow. You know we have fearful storms on this coast sometimes. This is the first we've had since the accident in the mine. We're feeling a little anxious, with Tod away."

Jessie raised her eyebrows in the least. "Is he so necessary? If he were here what could he do more than the others?"

Mrs. Lyttle's delay said what she thought of Jessie.

"At a time like this, we who know him best think him extremely necessary," she answered; and there followed a long quiet pause, while poor Jes-

sie took the snub meekly and was thankful in her heart for it.

As they rose together from the table Mrs. Lyttle looked out of the window up the lowering and darkened hillside where the renovated cottage stood almost ready for her guests.

"Luke has gone up there to see that everything is made storm-proof. I'm glad you hadn't moved in before this storm came. Luke said he'd come down for you soon, if the rain holds off. There's that double door on the west, he says you must be consulted about."

"Dear Mrs. Lyttle," said the guest indolently but pleasantly, "tell Luke I'll be pleased with whatever he thinks is best. He always does the best things. It's going to rain—and I'm tired of architecture." Jessie smiled as she vanished through the door, and Mrs. Lyttle went to other parts of her house with a wrinkle of speculation on her brow.

Jessie tied on her hat and went round in the wind to the stable to settle a certain burning question. Todhunter could leave her without goodbye then—had he taken Pawnee from her also? But the horse was there. She took his face in her hands, saddled

him herself hastily, and a few minutes later appeared again before astonished Mrs. Lyttle.

"I don't think it will rain after all," she said; "the wind is too high. I'm going to take Pawnee for a gallop. We'll go as far as Treddlestone and fetch those things for you if you like."

Mrs. Lyttle gasped. "To Treddlestone, dear, in this storm? You mustn't do it. Wait at least and let Luke take you. He's coming down—I can see him from here. He wants to speak to you about the door, you know."

"I'm safe anywhere on Pawnee," said Jessie hurriedly. "The door—tell Luke to do as he thinks best. I really don't care about it."

"Jessie,"—Mrs. Lyttle paused because she wished to be impressive—"I don't think Tod would like you to go so far in this weather, dear." She saw a flush that looked like one of distress spring into the girl's face.

"Tod has nothing whatever to do with it. Please give me the list—dear Mrs. Lyttle, please do!" Then, more to the tone than the words, Mrs. Lyttle succumbed, and watched Pawnee flying up the valley road like a ship before the wind.

"Now I wonder what can be the matter?" she said, sitting down suddenly. "I'd greatly like to know. Poor Tod has evidently offended somehow —Luke, too, I should judge." A vague intuition which seemed preposterous entered the lady's mind but quickly left it again. "What nonsense," she said, softly smiling; "they're like David and Jonathan, those two. I don't believe even a woman could put them apart. Besides, Luke—why, Luke Lyttle could have any girl he wanted, almost—up or down the coast."

But she observed her son closely when he came in and she told him of Jessie's sudden determination to ride. He did not seem perturbed or crestfallen at the news, but said quietly that if she did not return within a reasonable time he would go in search of her. Mrs. Lyttle's last suspicion vanished.

Hour after hour the storm mounted. From a low fretful moaning the wind's voice arose till it screamed among the crags that here and there buttressed the land from the ocean. The cry of the distant Puffing Hole came soughing down over the valley—but still Luke made no movement toward following Jessie. Like a man well content he went

about the duties that were his in connection with the mine, and Mrs. Lyttle wondered at his seeming carelessness. But in the afternoon, just as she herself had grown anxious, Jessie appeared, safe.

There was care enough in Luke's manner then. Every office that should be done for Jessie he did, and did, moreover, with a slow and careful pleasure that would have made the actions lingering and lover-like, had not his skill just saved them from that. If there were any such significance at moments, no eyes but Jessie's detected it; and they sometimes snubbed him fiercely, and again, slowly and as though against their own will, received his homage. But he did not grow perturbed, no matter what they did, nor his manner less assured and careful. He rarely spoke to her, and she spoke to him only to say "thank you."

He was only at intervals in the house. All that evening the storm raged, steadily increasing. Uneasiness regarding the mine spread.

At last when night fell upon the valley world, and the house lights quivered out dimly against the hillside, there gleamed down near the tumultuous raging sea a sunken red eye of light which domi-

nated all the rest. There Great Trevanny lay in care of her watchers.

The wild sea was breaking into her again. She looked sullen and dangerous as though she knew. Both the Lyttles were out there, helping and directing the gangs of workers.

Until very late in the night Jessie and Mrs. Lyttle sat up together. Through all other noises of the storm they could hear occasionally the signalling of the coastguards at the small station down the coast. In storms those coasts were deadly to shipping, and they had already begun to take their toll of men and vessels.

Toward midnight Luke came in, dressed from head to heel in glistening wet oilskins; and Mrs. Lyttle looked frightened.

"Tod ought to be here, Luke. If this keeps up you'll telegraph him to come back, won't you?"

"We've tried already. The wires are down. Father'll send a man down the coast after him the moment the wind moderates."

Luke took some coffee from Jessie, who gave it without looking at him—and was gone again. Even in such a dress, drenched and shining with salt

spray, bareheaded, holding his flapping sou'wester under his arm while he stood near her, he was still the cavalier.

Jessie came and sat on an ottoman at Mrs. Lyttle's feet, and was very quiet for a long time.

"Do you think they'll get Tod?" she asked.

"Oh yes, to-morrow; but I wish he was here now. He could do things, and one feels safer when he is here. It's just because he is Todhunter, I suppose. Don't you know yet how that is, Jessie?"

And Jessie, who knew very well indeed, sank her face on her hands guiltily for answer.

The pitchy darkness beyond the windows—the storm, so like the storm in her own heart—and that sunk and tempest shaken red light that trembled down by the sea, had come to signify to her mind Luke Lyttle and her wayward fancy. Every time she raised her eyes the red light showed her where he was. Rather than look on it any longer she went away to her own room, whose window gave upon the east.

* * * * * * * * *

Next morning, beside that window she had fled from last night, Luke came to her and they talked

together. There was a slight temporary lull in the storm.

He had come unawares upon her, and at first they had made the pretence of dealing flirtatiously with the situation and one another. Luke's face was eager, but the deepening scarlet of hers was scarcely for his presence or his light words. Jessie was not fighting this morning; and already Todhunter's image shrank away, seemed to fade to a regret, as some once dear thing long ago lost.

Through the noise of the wind came two faint distant reports from the life savers' station down the coast.

"There's another wreck outside," Luke said. "The coastguards lost several of their men last night, and they've called for volunteers. Jessie—will you come down with me? There are a great many people there, and you ought to see it. I came up for you."

Jessie looked away, hesitatingly. No reason was apparent why she should not grant his request. But one existed. So strong a one that the going with him would be the crossing of the Rubicon! But though she knew it, and the quality of hope and

eagerness in his voice betrayed it also, the traitor in her citadel of true love clamored to yield—to be with him just this little while. She said without turning round. "Yes; I think I'll go."

Quickly he brought warm wraps, and she let him put them on her. Her face looked out like a beautiful flower above the white scarf he wound round her neck. Not for days had she allowed him so near her, and while his hands worked he covered her silence with light and rapid talk. She was wondering in her heart whether he, too, thought of Todhunter. Deep down, crushed and overwhelmed by the odds her faithlessness had thrust upon it, that dear regret still had the power to sting.

So she crossed her Rubicon. Before he came to her Luke Lyttle had also crossed his; but Jessie did not guess, until later, all that the crossing had meant to him.

He chose a place in the lee of a great rock. Here the wind was deflected past them; and beneath at a little distance the groups of life savers strove in vain with the wild tossing waters. In that niche of the rock was comparative calm and they could talk.

It was necessary to stand very close. The stim-

ulating forbidden wine of each other's presence affected them both. Each knew that a price too high for holiness had been paid for it. For a little, as though their coming meant nothing more than the mere sight seeing, Luke explained to her what was being done.

"The coast guards were endeavoring to send a rope out to the wrecked vessel, but the high wind was making their efforts futile. Down further a group stood by a small boat. It was the life boat and they were going to make an effort to launch it. No, they were not all coast guards. Some of them, as she could see, were men from the glen. They were the volunteers who had responded—strong, picked men, expert rowers." Jessie, recognizing two of them, asked if they were not friends of his.

Luke admitted heavily, "Yes." His voice had grown strangely slow and embarrassed.

"You're an expert rower, Luke, aren't you?" Jessie remembered that Todhunter had once told her so.

"I'm so considered," said the young man, briefly. He was not looking at her.

Several other men emerged on a run from the

valley. The boat's crew was almost made up. But still they stood impatiently, looking about for some other who was expected.

Suddenly, with a small distant shout, the faces of the group were upraised toward that rock on which Jessie stood. The leader signalled vehemently. Like the climax of an incredible dream the truth flashed on her, and she turned to Luke, whispering breathlessly, "They're waiting for you."

But the cavalier's face was pale and unhappy. Waving his hand in dissent he muttered doggedly, "Let them get some one else. I'm not going this time."

"But they were expecting you," she cried. Did you promise? Oh, surely you hadn't promised, Luke?"

He answered hesitatingly, not looking at her, "It was understood that I would be there. I have the right to refuse if I wish. I wished to-day." Embarrassment, passionate determination struggled together in his face as he raised his eyes at last and looked full at her.

"Oh!" she cried faintly and suddenly.

Incredulity and pity for him, then a wretched

feeling of fear for them both swept over her, striking her errant fancy its instant death blow. She felt herself left a wreck, like that one below. She slipped from him beyond the shoulder of the bluff, into the grasp of the giant wind, and he followed her. "Come away," she whispered, "take me away from this place at once. Oh, Luke—why, why did you do it?"

Earnestly he strove to detain her, entreating.

"Jessie hear me—don't ask me that. Why did I do it? You know why."

"For me?" she cried. "Don't say you did that out of compliment to me. Oh—" pushing her hands against his breast, she begged him, "go quickly. They cannot get away at once in this sea, and you'll have a chance to redeem yourself. Don't speak to me—don't! There's been wrong enough done for one day."

But Luke caught up her hands with vexed and desperate passion. "I will not go, Jessie, and I will speak to you. There has been no wrong done except mine. If I'd supposed they'd notice me up there I'd never have brought you, of course. But beyond that I care nothing. I had to see you!

Listen! we sent for Todhunter in the night. He should have been here hours ago. Rather than not see you before he came I'd have fought every angel in heaven—and every devil under the sea. Now do you understand?"

"Hush, hush! that's wicked," she cried, tearful but defiant, wresting her hands to herself and turning from him.

"Jessie—you'll wreck everything;—Tod, me, yourself. You don't love him. Tell him so. He's a man and he can bear it. It was the fear you wouldn't tell him that has made a ruffian and a fool of me."

How deep, how near the truth his passionate sentences cut. Unconsciously he had arraigned her for what she was,—the worse culprit of the two.

Jessie flung up her head—not pride, but shame and grief written upon her face. Shame for her own apostasy, and for Luke's lapse from a man's duty and honor for her sake! Her piteous honesty was there, too. He was her lover's best beloved friend, and in part at least she had brought about his downfall.

"I'll tell you something," she began.

Then, shrinking before Luke's sombre eyes, but bravely and breathlessly, she told him the whole bitter, naked truth. Sacrificing her own pride, she owned to a certain wild wayward fancy she had had, and had mistaken for something else; how she had told it to her lover and they had parted. When she spoke of that, deep sobs shook her voice; but she choked them back proudly and went on.

She was nothing to Tod, now, nothing whatever. She had broken his heart and her own, and had brought mischief and injury incalculable into the life of his friend. She would gladly make reparation; but she feared that to the friend none was possible since she could not give him what he desired. She could only beg him humbly to forgive her if he could, and forget her.

The cavalier, listening to the shamed, humbled words, would not at first believe.

He had had good reason to believe otherwise, and he could plead his own case as well as any man. If Jessie's pride had been hurt in this encounter, his had been humbled into the dust—not before her only, but before those lifelong associates who had seen him desert a brave man's promised duty that

he might go to talk with his friend's sweetheart.

But when he saw how he distressed her he stopped. There was so little either could say. He kept his remorse, his wounded honor, and the jealous pangs he inevitably suffered, to himself. Towards her at least he would not be ungenerous.

So they walked home again, like two sad punished children, with the silence of their terrible mutual catastrophe lying between them.

CHAPTER XXI.

CORIN BREWS A DRINK.

Even then, while brave men above ground, and brave men far beneath, fought the maddened seas, Todhunter had arrived in Staley Crags.

Luke and Jessie had passed without observing it a black horse, saddled, with reins hanging, grazing wearily in a sheltered spot on the hillside. It had been there some time; but no one else seemed to have observed it either, except one lame child with a crutch, who had set forth eagerly at once to reconnoiter. It was not thus that his friend was in the habit of returning from his journeys down the coast.

The messenger sent out in the night to recall the chief engineer had not reached him. Hours earlier Todhunter himself, observing the force of the storm and knowing better than any the danger it meant at home, had set out on the return journey. During the previous hour or two the wound in his wrist

had ached so excessively as to force his attention at times from that other intense ache in which every faculty of mind and body was partaking savagely.

He fancied the bandages had grown tight. Doubtless that would account for the unbearable throbbing. So he stopped for a few minutes at the house of a surgeon whom he knew in the place where he was, and asked him to loosen the dressing. That gentleman had, instead, instantly stripped it off and after the merest glance at the wound had announced, "You might as well make up your mind to stay here with me to-night, Tod. I won't let you travel with that."

"Thanks, very much; but I'm afraid you'll have to let me, this time. Do the best you can for me. I can't stay," said Todhunter, quietly.

"But you must, I tell you," the friend expostulated. "You'll lose your arm, my friend. You'll run a good chance of losing your life if you persist."

"Is it really so bad? I'm sorry; there are a few things I'd like to do with my life yet. Nevertheless—" Todhunter sat down on the table edge and extended a red, swelling forearm. "You small chaps

don't appreciate the grip life has on a fellow like me—but when your duty to other folk calls you I've seen you do just what I'm doing." The speaker smiled; and the surgeon, who was young himself and slight, and admired his amiable, gigantic friend immensely, cried angrily: "Oh, you big fool," and went unwillingly to fetch his instruments and bandages.

A few minutes later he repeated the remark anxiously under his breath, as he watched the friend ride from his door into the darkness of two o'clock in the morning.

At ordinary times the journey was one of only a few hours for a good horse. Pawnee had traveled the entire distance many a time without a hand on the rein. But the night was pitch black. The moor was the ancient pandemonium of the winds, broad and unfettered like the sea's self—their immemorial playground whose steadfast billows arose in stable pomp, and sank again into valleys and wide free spaces, whither the winds might play and shriek and sweep from all quarters of earth at once. It was such a night as the winds love. The heavens and the earth, and that tremendous clamoring void

to the left beyond the cliff's edge were like ink; and in the midst, for the winds to sport with was a strong man over whom strange qualms of sickness were already stealing,—and a horse that could not see the road he was to travel.

It seemed to Todhunter that the pain of his body brought relief to that of his mind. At least, thought was less poignant. He was compelled to think of the hammering in his head. After a while pain reigned there so supremely that it dislodged even the image of Jessie which had ruled over all other things for weeks. His horse repeatedly left the road, a dangerous thing on such a night in such a locality; and he began to suspect that his own touch was growing uncertain. If this had been Pawnee under him there would have been no trouble. But Pawnee was at home with Jessie, which was right, and better even than having him here.

This horse's gait, however, was growing unbearable. Every time his hoof struck, a hammer fell somewhere inside Todhunter's head. The jolt to his arm was so violent that it was making him sick. He decided that, if he was to arrive at home in a

condition of usefulness, it was imperative to get down and walk.

This he did, walking on the shore side of the animal so as not to be led unawares off the road. His arm, too, was easier in this position; and remembering always the warning he had received he was anxious to favor it as much as possible. This was necessary in order to delay the poison as much as might be until his duty was done. This idea remained in him long after all others had begun to grow confused.

For he forgot after awhile that this was not Pawnee beside whom he walked. Long periods of pain and mental dullness passed; after which he would find himself bearing heavily against his horse, and both walking amid grass and heather; and he would have thought that he had been asleep, only that he knew better. Then having found the road again he would rally his faculties by a strong effort. The cliff was very near, and he felt afraid of these lapses.

So he plodded through the night. When dawn came up, bleak and gray, he was still far from home, but he had partly forgotten now. He was talking to Jessie; Jessie who had come back to him, and sat

on Pawnee's back where he could touch her, and answered him! His breath had grown rapid, but he thought that was the wind's work. He told her, "I had a bad dream in the night—and I've been so lonely for you, dear." And again, beseechingly, "I don't think I could live without you, Jessie. Give me one kiss, darling, won't you?" At last a severe jolt wrenched him back into consciousness that he talked to a phantom, and that he had stumbled over a gray boulder beside the road, a landmark telling that the valley was only half a mile away.

He had no longer any distinct notion of what he had intended; but that idea of urgent duty awaiting him was still with him, spurring him to haste. Not many minutes later he stood, large, delirious and weakened, within the earthen threshold of an ancient shed standing solitary on the moor, and used as a storage place for discarded mining material. Obviously the spot had some connection with his purpose; haste said that it was near, and he had laboriously guided his horse thither.

Parts of old-fashioned machinery, chains, bad ore, broken implements, and here and there white shining ingots of tin, cast aside because their purity was

below standard, lay all about him in the dim light. Todhunter fumbled deliriously among them, searching for the duty. Soon even that anchor parted. Slowly and unwillingly, as though loth to humble himself so, he sank forward upon his knees. Utter darkness came down, through which at intervals only Jessie's name, and the whisper of a clean devoted love trembled like a golden thread.

Several hours passed before he was discovered—hours in which he fought his battle with Death unaided and unconscious, before his strong perfect physique could check the inroads of the poison which, entering by his wound, had been disseminated through his blood.

Then there stood above him those of whom, not long before, he had spoken in his royal strength. "Human jackals, Jessie; low beasts." All honest men were down at the sea or in the mine that day. These two who loved neither danger nor work had come to the shed as a likely place in which to find plunder.

They found a rich and easy prize. Enmity sweetened the task, for the bruises his hands had inflicted on them still ached. He had considerable money,

for he still wore the clothes in which he had traveled from London. Also they found the diamond ring he had bought for Jessie, and one or two personal trinkets of his own, and his gold watch.

These things Pike laid down in a place by themselves near the door until he and his crony should have time to make a fair division. This was the most hazardous undertaking they had yet engaged in together, and no undue advantage was to be taken by either. Pike's hands trembled. Brave at no time, he was deadly afraid this morning—of Corin and of the thing which he knew Corin purposed doing. He was afraid also of the enemy who had suddenly grown so still, and on whose pale forehead rivers of moisture had suddenly begun to mat the dark shaggy hair. Bending over the slack figure Pike confided to it in a conciliatory whisper, "It bain't no doing of mine, Tod. You thrashed me, too, but I doan't bear 'ee no such awful grudge. Remember that."

Then Pike went to his crony Corin, who in the other corner was busy with a fire and an old crucible.

The smoke and fumes of the fire filled the shed as the gusts swept in at the unprotected doorway, but

the flames leaped hotly around the crucible, in which the miner was melting down one of those old discarded tin ingots. It was the look in his face that most of all frightened Pike.

Corin was literally brewing his vengeance. He was brewing it as his mining forefathers had done in their savage days hundreds of years before on these same moors; when to pour their molten metal down the throat of an enemy who had offended against their mining laws was considered a proper and convenient way of fitting the punishment to the crime. The impression which a few centuries of civilization had left on their descendant had been wiped out in a single instant two nights ago. For two nights Corin had gone, carrying the taste of earth and grass in his mouth, and consuming with ferocity and hate which he had seen no hope of wreaking. Now that this safe and glorious chance had presented itself, and his great enemy lay harmless as an infant in his hands, Corin was brewing a drink for him that should forever wash that taste from his own mouth.

For what might happen afterward he cared no more than any other murderer.

Pike was made of altogether softer stuff. He was afraid of himself, of the poor victim who yesterday could have protected himself against ten such as he; of the fearful deed; and most of all of his crony Corin. He said.

"The poor gert chap's so weak as a kitten, Corin. 'Ee better not do it to him."

"You'd wait till he wor stronger, I suppose. He'd let you tie him up easier then, perhaps." Corin answered, briefly.

"Be you goin' to tie him up, Corin?" But Corin did not reply. One of the terrifying things to Pike was that Corin talked so little.

Neither of them observed one thing. A boy whom the smoke had attracted had crept to a corner of the old entrance and was peering in at them, and at the prone figure on the floor. He had good reason to be afraid of them, but for that figure's sake he stayed. He could not make out the meaning of everything; but he saw the plunder and knew they were bad men. Love made him brave. With his wide eyes alert, he watched, and as their backs were turned crawled on his stomach toward that

gold watch, possessed himself of it and was gone into the howling wind.

The storm would have swept a taller thing than he to utter destruction, but he was so small and stunted that he was almost safe. The terror behind him spurred him on. At last he perceived two persons, a man and a woman, standing under the crest of the hill, talking together. Once he had thrown stones at that girl, and had bitten the man's hand when he had tried to defend her. But knowing them for the two persons in all the world the dearest to his friend, he fled to them, screaming the fear and entreaty to which he could not fit the words.

He knew that the man at least would know that gold watch. It was the only interpreter he had, and he thrust it into Luke Lyttle's hands, shaking in his excitement and striving by every means a dumb animal might employ to express the terrible urgency of the case.

But Jan, who knew nothing of the circumstances just passed between these two people, beheld only a sad tragedy. The watch lay slackly in Luke's hand. Undoubtedly Luke understood that Todhunter was in desperate straits of some kind; but there lay be-

tween that friend and himself an accumulated grievance which he could not in that first smarting moment forgive.

Jan saw the handsome, aristocratic face hesitate, harden, turn away—and saw Jessie, whom in his ignorance he had slighted, begging and praying; saw the tears in her eyes, and saw her agonized frightened hands covering them while the jealous cavalier stood with averted face. Suddenly, like a wild thing she turned, and catching Jan by his free arm fled with him under the lee of the hill, below the sweep of the wind, back by the way he had come.

CHAPTER XXII.

TODHUNTER JUDGES.

Todhunter had quietly opened his eyes, feeling something fumbling, fumbling, tugging at him. Some small wild animal it must be, but he could not locate the sensation at first. Though his eyes were open they told him nothing. A great soft rushing sound which he did not remember or recognize as wind, was in his ears. From the place of these indefinite sensations he himself was a great distance removed, deterred by some force impalpable, striving to return.

Pungent smoke in his nostrils and throat caused him to cough violently. A voice said distinctly.

"Corin, come away, for the love of God. He's findin' himself. Us'll be caught." Then sense and sight leaped to his eyes, not the clear sane sense that habitually dwelt there, but sufficient for his necessity. He recognized these two skulking figures

through the smoke, and understood that they were trying to tie his hands. *His!*

In the immediate and terrible melee that followed, when his hands were free and he had struggled up to his feet, blind and dizzy, against two heavy bodies that clung and strove to pull him down again—he knew dimly that some one was helping him. One of his assailants was gone. The other was Corin, who seemed a veritable devil. His black eyes gleamed like those of a savage, with hate and plain murder written therein. He would not be shaken off until that mysterious help returned and struck him down with the celerity and force, apparently, of a thunderbolt.

As he fell his body overturned something. Instantly to a loud scream and an intense heat there arose another sound that Todhunter's sick sense was most familiar with—the hiss of molten metal rushing into the matrix.

Corin, not desperately hurt, rolled swiftly far out of reach and lay there, shouting. It was not difficult to guess the nature of the revenge he had prepared for his enemy. Todhunter, knowing all the lore of that country and of the craft so well, needed

no man to tell him. He groped for the door, feeling a friendly hand hold him, and hearing a contemptuous voice say, "See to that devil yonder and stop his mouth. You're his brother, if I don't mistake."

As he stood outside and the cool breath of the storm revived him and blew his scattered faculties together, Todhunter saw that the one who had helped him and who now stood beside him, was the old preacher.

"I owe you my thanks," he said simply and weakly. "You're pretty strong."

"Sit down, sir. I ought to be strong, perhaps—if you knew." The voice had in it a strange touch of authority as well as gentleness. Todhunter obeyed and sat down as he had been told. But the memory of his duty had returned upon him.

"I mustn't stay. I feel better than I did, and I'm needed over there. This storm is about the worst thing that could have happened to us."

The preacher took the swollen and tender arm in his hand, saying, "You'll feel still better presently, when I have helped you. I know what your disease is. Traveling all over the world as I have, a man

learns knowledge of many kinds unless he is a fool." Taking out his knife, he opened the sleeve from wrist to shoulder; then unwound the bandages and exposed the wound.

Whatever suggestion of age or weakness had once hung about the preacher, it had vanished now. His white hair seemed but a majestic setting for his years, and for his fine, eager, stern looking old face. Again he was the learned savant, of whom he had told Jessie the story that sunny day when they talked together. Todhunter remembered the tale. Jessie had told it to him—which was a reason in itself for not forgetting—and leaning back docilely against the shed he thought of it and watched with sick curiosity.

The shouts within had grown quiet. But Corin's voice, raised in profanity as he tried to walk, told that his burn was not serious. Presently he came limping through the door, helped by Pike. Todhunter saw them both, but not knowing yet that they had robbed him, let them depart; and so for the present the two rascals got away with the booty which was to be their final undoing.

Meantime the preacher worked. Rising, he

brought clear running water, of which there is always plenty on the moors, and with it thoroughly bathed the wound and the whole arm, observing how the resulting coolness and entire freedom from pressure brought relief. While he worked he strove, like a true physician, to distract the patient's thoughts to other matters. He told tales of his travels—the same which he had recounted to Jessie, but told now with many differences, since the listener was a man. It was an able raconteur who spoke, and Todhunter listened as Jessie had listened. When the time was ripe for his next move the speaker came back lightly to the present subject.

"I have learned surgery in almost every country on the globe, and practised it, at need, on almost every animal, from a camel to a man. Man is the best subject; he has reason and courage. The poor beasts start and shriek when they feel the knife."

"Tell me when you're ready," said Todhunter. "You'll find I won't do either. I suppose," he said hesitating a little, "you know what you're doing?"

"Have I not eased you already? If I didn't know —if I thought there were any hands in this remote

country in which you would be safer than in mine I would not touch you."

He went to the spring, washed his knife carefully therein and returned, saying, "I am ready. There will be pain, but do not start." Then with careful practised eye and cool hand he drove the knife into the infected centre and laid it bare.

The pain was great, but relief in a certain degree followed. Todhunter's thoughts turned again, with hope now, to his duty. He would have thanked the old man for making it possible. "You are a surgeon, a scholar and a great traveler, and you have been two months in my house—but I don't know your name, even," he said, smiling. "Who are you?"

The preacher's manner underwent a sudden change. He had begun washing again, and finally rebinding the wound with the cleanest portion of the bandages. Across his dark face, full of nervous energy a moment before, passed a look almost of timidity. He said, evasively and hurriedly, "Men call me 'the preacher,' because I wander and preach. I am never longer than a few days in any one place, and I have had no home like yours for many years.

But I have another name. It is the same as yours—Payson! You might have known it at any time."

Then briefly, as though he feared silence, he recited the story of that memory he had long carried. How once, years ago, he had had a wife and a little son. How he had gone away one day, inspired by the fatal call to preach, and had lost them; and for years they had been blotted from his memory. How he had wandered alone over the world, till at last something of the past, scarcely clearer than a vision, had come back to him and brought him again to England. How of late he had remembered more and more clearly.

Todhunter listened. He had heard the story from Jessie, but it had not arrested him as this inspired, passionate recital did. His eyes, fever smitten but steady, never wavered from the speaker's face, which was never once lifted to him. Any greater difference than existed between this fine old face and his could not have been conjured up by imagination; yet the mutual high strung feeling of the moment produced a similarity between the two men.

"How old was your son at the time you left him?"

"Six months old."

"Do you remember his name?"

The tone was so noncommittal that the old man looked up at last, swiftly. The younger was his judge to whom he was appealing for mercy. But he was back again in his past and his grief, and the cadences of it were in his voice.

"We called our son Todhunter. But his mother laughed and said the name was too big for him while he was so little; and so we called him Tod. The ignorant said he was afflicted of God, because his appearance was unusual and unlike that of other children. But I think his mother only loved him the better for that."

Doubtless! Todhunter was recalling the only memento of her he had—the paper on which she had written his name. This poor old visionary, scholar, traveler, enthusiast, had wronged them all three if his tale was true; and yet that he was to be blamed was not clear.

Truly they were judge and culprit. The sick, silent, grave-eyed young giant had the right to call the old man to account, and judge him. The old man knew it and was complying—not cravenly but

as though he stood before a tribunal that was worthy to judge.

"You have some proofs to show me, I suppose," said Todhunter.

"Yes. Otherwise I should not have dared to speak. I had searched all England and found no trace of you until I came here. The instant I saw you I knew you. Then I learned your name and your history. Still I could not speak. I had no proofs—for my memory was still imperfect. I had never been able to recall the name of the place we lived in. One day about a week ago it suddenly returned to me. It was the last link I wanted, and I went up there immediately. I found a few of the old friends who had known me, still living—and I brought away the proofs I knew you would ask for, my son."

The preacher produced papers. One of them announced his marriage, many years before in an English university town. The other, dated two years later, recorded the birth of his son Todhunter. They were copies of church records, and could have been had at any time for the asking; but the preacher

was the only man who had known where to look, and he had forgotten until now.

That young judge before whom he stood read them and silently held out his hand, and the preacher's hand grasped it. There were many questions yet to be asked, much that they would learn about each other's lives in the years past, but the vital point had been placed beyond question. In the strength and sincerity and silence of the hand clasp father and son acknowledged each other; and the younger said with his grave smile, "I reckon sir, I may regard myself as a gentleman, then."

But he was plainly very sick. Underneath its rugged masculine weather-bronze Todhunter's face looked singularly flushed and haggard. His delirium was past, but fever was upon him still and by it he was buoyed as by a stimulant. He explained hurriedly about that duty that was awaiting him, and how he must not delay a moment longer. From the time he had awakened in the shed till now was some twenty minutes or so, and he had before that lost several hours. He would have drawn forth his watch, but discovered that it was missing. A

few moments' search showed that Pike and Corin had employed their time well that morning.

"The thieving rascals," he said, vexed, "they certainly had me at a disadvantage this time, and they knew it." Then his sweet temper returned and he smiled on that old man, his father. "Let them go. I can get back the watch and—another thing they took—anyway. As for the money, I'm better off than I was before they came. I must go, sir. I reckon that I owe you for life a second time after this morning."

As the fiercer gusts struck him he swayed slightly. The evidence of his disease was written plainly on him, and the old man, alarmed, sprang to detain him. "You must not go. You cannot think of your duty now. If you go down the mine you'll endanger your life." But Todhunter, so much the larger and taller of the two, set him aside with a deprecatory gesture.

Perhaps because of the stimulus of his distress and excitement, or perhaps because he had at all times been a visionary, the preacher's face underwent a rapid change. Into his keen dark eyes leaped the light of inspiration. He flung back his

white hair. Again he was the seer of the stone hut, who had looked into the future.

"Listen!" He flung his arm before his son as though to bar his way, while he looked into the storm swept distance, speaking rapidly and intently. "I have always seen disaster before you, such as not all your will or strength could overcome. Now it is coming. Where you stand there is no longer any earth. The sea is everywhere. There is no storm, for the storm is long ago past, and the tides are rising and falling peacefully over the submerged land. Here under our feet I hear the waves washing. But I do not see you any longer. Do not go, my son."

The old man paused, stricken into silence by the fear of that which he saw. His fire was dead, the color was gone from his face. His tall, ugly, and gentle son quietly lowered the restraining arm and motioning toward the depths wherein his business lay, said huskily. "They're fighting that disaster down there, now—would you have me go home and to bed, sir?"

He set his father aside, and slowly, with long shaky strides set forth across the grass. The

preacher, gazing after him, seemed transformed suddenly into a very old and infirm man.

A slight dip in the country offered some shelter from the wind, and led down into the valley by a short cut. Making for this Todhunter in a few minutes came upon his lady, who with little Jan, was coming up rapidly by the same way because it was the quickest and most sheltered.

Seeing her coming he looked swiftly across the heath to where his late assailants dwindled into distance. They were harmless. And then if it had been possible he would have avoided his lady. He was in no condition to present himself to her eyes that had already strayed faithlessly from his ugliness toward Luke; and he might not stay, for his overdue duty was urging him on.

So they met.

Somehow, without any impairment of his courtesy, he possessed the power of setting others at a great distance when he desired. He did not put Jessie away. He did not wish to do so; but in these past hours he had schooled himself to give her up, believing it was for her happiness—so greatly and tenderly he loved her. So in spite of his fever and

sickness and dishevelment she felt, as she looked up to his height a cold and dreadful fear that she had lost him by her fickleness; that believing her inconstant he had turned away and willingly given up love of her, and no longer desired her. She had meant to tell him everything and explain and beg him to forgive her—but she could not beg to be taken back to the love of a man who no longer desired her.

So their meeting was strangely formal, considering how their two hearts were beating. If the sight of her gave him pain and caused him to look away from her often, there was pain in her blue eyes that matched it. Jan crept to Todhunter's side and possessed himself of the great hand. By the boy's presence he divined that she had somehow received word of his plight and had come to help. She would have done that though, he knew, for any man alive, from a sense of pity or duty or because she thought she had wronged him, perhaps. And presently he learned from her own hesitating low voice that she had been with Luke when the news came; and that Luke—she endeavored to slide over the admission, but he caught it and read into it its full dis-

torted significance—Luke had refused to come, so she had come alone. The hot color on her cheek was for memory; but Todhunter thought it was for Luke. After that he would have scorned to take advantage, by a single word, of her coming.

In answer to her frightened persistent questioning about himself he told her what had befallen, making light of it to soften its gross horrid barbarity to her ears. He had been sick for a while, and these two fellows who bore him an old grudge had caught him at a disadvantage. He had not been altogether himself at the time perhaps, or they would never have dared. It must have been then that Jan had come and found him, and gone to her with the news. But, he said with a momentary cadence in his voice that belied him, he was sorry she had been troubled so. She might have run into danger perhaps—and for that what could have consoled him? She ought not to have come up alone in this storm. It was unsafe.

So they came to a branching path on the hillside where he must leave her. They were not far from Mr. Lyttle's house, and she would be safe now—she and little Jan. With slight punctiliousness,

which was his refuge from the tenderness her nearness inspired in him, he begged to be excused, as he had urgent business and must make haste.

Poor Jessie looked up. In all her existence she had never felt so like a fly on the wall, so uncounted and futile. He was so ill, so gentle, so inexorable, and she loved him so; and now he was going down that horrible mine to his death. Terrified, she laid her hand on his throbbing swollen arm and begged him, "Tod, no—no; don't, please don't go."

"I must, Jessie," he said, releasing his arm, for the grasp of her loving fingers made him almost faint with pain. But he did not explain any further to her. He knew that she knew all the circumstances. Only, moving away from her, regret mingled with the indomitable purpose in his face, "you know I'd have done anything—anything possible—to serve you?"

She was not thinking of other men's lives then, nor his duty. She flung her own pride to the winds, called him back imperiously, red and white chasing each other on her cheeks.

"Tod—come back a minute. If I should say

"Tod—come back. If I should say 'stay for my sake,' would you stay then?"—Page 316

'stay for my sake,' would you stay then?" she demanded of him.

Perhaps he thought she was using her known power over him to keep him; or perhaps he did not trust himself to delay. He stooped quickly, and taking her hand, kissed it as he had done on the night they parted. Without looking at her, without speaking to her again, he turned away down the path leading toward the mine, bowing himself against the wind.

Jessie sat down where she was, behind a little bush, and burst into a tempest of grief. All her contrition, all her belated returning fidelity to him to have resulted in this!

"God bless him and bring him back—if he never looks at me again," she wept heartbrokenly. "I did think that would have kept him—but he's a king. As for Luke—" Jessie's tears flowed afresh at the memory—"I'll never, never forgive myself. That awful thing this morning was three quarters my doing—and now I can't imagine what ailed me!"

Presently little, ragged, unkempt, deaf and dumb Jan slipped down beside her, and shyly stole his arm

around her bowed neck; and she let him. He knew this beautiful girl's secret now, and did not hate her any more; for it appeared to be the same as his.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHIEF ENGINEER.

From where Jessie still sat she watched her lover approach the pit mouth. Down there the most fearsome and tell tale thing in her eyes was the rhythmical, tireless action of the great pumps, working ceaselessly hour after hour, raising the water from those black depths into which he was going. Beyond them the sea tossed in a wilderness of billows, into which the pumps discharged their waters in torrents. Down there also, in the work sheds, every last man, woman and child whom the pit employed above ground was at work; moved by the fear that to-morrow there would be no work left them to do. The mine was their father and mother, to whom they looked for their daily bread, and who had been the primal cause of their being brought into existence in that place.

These knew, as did the watching girl on the hillside, that those underground who fought the flood

waited and prayed for the coming of the engineer, who was strangely delayed. When at last his large, straight, dilapidated figure passed the sheds on his way to the shaft their ignorant eyes followed him as though he were a portent and promise of the public safety.

He did not disappoint them. His gait was less certain and strong than usual, but there was about him no trace of indecision or futility. If to help them save Great Trevanny from the greedy Atlantic was all they required of him, he could do that, sick as he was. It was his business to know resources they were ignorant of.

Watching, his sweetheart saw him approach and stand briefly beside the pumps, and saw men running eagerly to meet him; but her eyes never lost his form for an instant or confused it with theirs. It was impossible to do that, she consciously thought, with a sharp stab of pain and pride in him, though he was no longer hers. She saw that some kind of a hurried consultation took place, and that he donned a miner's wide hat on which a candle flared for an instant till the wind blew it out. Then holding his hat in his hand he stepped out on the treach-

erous tiny platform of the man engine, and was lost to her.

Still for half an hour she sat there helplessly and waited. Little Jan's eyes were turned silently in the same direction as hers, and her arm was about him. Together they watched the men standing expectantly about the pit mouth, seeming to wait for something.

Todhunter did not reappear as she had hoped and half thought he would. Only the pumps, working as tirelessly as ever, brought up dreadful word of how things went below. As with every swift upward reach of the machinery the furious gray-white torrents leaped forth, Jessie thought of disappointed wolves, and hated them because of the brave helpless prey they had desired to batten on.

Presently it appeared that all those men were obeying some order. Miners who had been at work below were coming up hurriedly, some by the ladders and some by the man engine; congregating on the bank a moment, and again disappearing. Sick and breathless with the desire to know what these things meant, and to learn what Todhunter was doing, Jessie took Jan's hand in hers and struggled down through the storm to the place.

Down there one had to shout to be heard above the screaming of the wind, the clank and whirr of machinery, and the thunderous beating of the waves. So many fearful sounds, all eloquent of threatened disaster, and of those unknown perils below, into which her lover had stepped at the call of his duty, appalled the girl. But other women were there; they should be no braver than she was. She caught a rough, bareheaded miner by the sleeve, and, pale faced, demanded of him with sweet, steady, imperious voice what was being done.

The man knew her immediately and touched his forelock; but her self respect had been so mortally hurt this morning that it seemed almost strange he should do it.

"The sea have broken into the New Lode, ma'am, an' Great Trevanny be flooding up. Mr. Payson have ordered work stopped everywhere this instant an' every man to come up. Some of us be going down to him again, however, as he've called for volunteers."

"Volunteers for what? Isn't he coming up?" Jessie gasped. She did not care what the miner thought.

"No, ma'am, he's not coming. They say he'm building a great dam to keep the water back. 'Tis rising fast beyond, an' he must build an' build an' build—faster and quicker'n it rises. 'Tis all that can save Great Trevanny now, if he can do it. If he can't do it, well, there bain't no men with families going down. Mr. Payson'll have none but the bachelor men, he says."

No doubt he said so. It was just such an order as he would have given. Only the men like himself, with mere sweethearts to leave, must be allowed to face such imminent danger and death. Jessie let go her hold, trembling, but striving to be brave, and crying something about "the danger, the horrible danger." The miner as he left her touched his forelock again quietly.

"The danger is as God wills, ma'am. Mr. Payson's down there, an' he's a good man an' knows his business. Us 'd go down to sea-bottom itself with 'en, an' glad, if he took us there."

So Jessie learned something else about her lover. He had another voice beside that one that had made true and tender love to her. One that made heroes of men! whose word could rally them in peril, to

meet death with him if necessary! He had but to call—and knowing he would be the leader, they went. The storm had risen to a fearful pitch. Just beyond the pit mouth winds and waters met headlong, raging and fighting for mastery as though each claimed that little spot where human lives had staked themselves in rash defiance. Through the pandemonium other girls came running disheveled, weeping because their sweethearts had gone down or were going. Jessie would not do that. Quickly she threw her arm round little Jan, and drew him away. Her tears and prayers were for the leader. God and the lonely hillside, and the little boy who scarcely understood, bore witness to them.

But presently she saw Luke coming.

He need not have met her, for he was running very swiftly, fierce as the wind was; but when he saw her he came directly toward her. She called him in her heart a coward and traitor as she stood waiting. Scarcely even pity for him was left since that moment when she had prayed him to go to Todhunter's help and he had refused. But he seemed not to care. He paused only a moment to give her his friend's watch which he still carried.

He was no longer the Luke Lyttle she had known. Somehow he had changed, vaguely and terribly.

"Take this, Jessie. He won't need it, and you may like to have it, in case things don't go altogether right. He's down there. You know, of course. I'm going to him."

"There is a saying, 'It's better late than never,'" she answered, with all the bitter cruelty and scorn she was capable of. But Luke did not resent; and even she was moved for an instant to regret the words.

He who had always been so buoyant and confident, so proud and sure of himself, turned his face upon her, so terrible in its remorse that she weakened and shrank.

"Jessie," he begged. "That Judas—that desperate and unhappy devil who disgraced himself this morning implores you to try to forget. Forget him—what he said—most of all what he did. He was a devil, but even he is capable of better moments than that, and he'll endeavor to prove it. Good-bye." He thrust the watch in her hands and was gone before she could speak, or could even think what to say to him.

All day Great Trevanny lay couched beside the sea. She was no longer the guardian goddess of the valley; but a brooding evil beast that knew her own dark purposes, and refused to impart them.

Todhunter and his band were down in the New Lode, which extended beneath the Puffing Hole. The main passageway which commanded all the rest of the section shone like the avenue of a city by night. In that dim, arched, water-eaten solitude, where men had long toiled alone to the accompaniment of streams that crept and seeped and glistened treacherously around, lights were passing to and fro in feverish haste; winding in long trails in and out. The ring of masons' trowels working rapidly, the trundling of wheels and the ceaseless movement of men's feet interrupted the long silence and darkness of the place.

They did not seem heroes, but demons building the foundations of unholy Pandemonium. The dam —a huge black object of stone and cement, fan-shaped, turning its convexity ahead toward the lost darkness of the doomed section—was so far built that there was no longer room to stand. They knelt, all along its length from the front rank to the

hindmost. Its tremendous thickness and strength would defy the pressure of the ocean itself, if they could finish in time. It was built in three sections, one behind the other and welded into each other and into the solid rock wall for strength.

Lest they delay, a hoarse, low, steady voice called continually from the furthest darkness ahead that they were but men alone in the center of the earth, and it was best to hasten. It was the voice of the Atlantic, entering in floods through the floor of the Puffing Hole. And fast as they built, black sea water—lapping silkily, springing up white and greedy to the debris splashing from the trowels over the edge—crept with terrifying swiftness up the face of the bulwark.

Panic rose with the water. Desperate speed was needed to keep ahead of it, such speed as they, fighting for life, were scarcely capable of. But between it and them stood, or rather knelt, the indomitable leader's bulk. The lowering roof rested on his shoulders. His figure was cramped in the small space. His massive throat was bare and his face swarthily ugly, his voice even now of a curious convincing gentleness that sufficed where other men

would perhaps have found it necessary to shout. He gave no order twice. And those of his men on whom his small, steadily set gray eyes lighted forgot the secret thoughts they had been thinking of the shaft, and the time necessary to reach it if the tide won in this race to the roof.

So the dam was built that would forever have saved Great Trevanny from her enemy, if natural causes over which no man could claim control had not willed it otherwise.

Early in the struggle Luke had come down.

Like some high mettled racer who—never having doubted his own powers until he saw the race lost—was bursting his proud spirit lest he fail again, Luke had flung himself into the breach beside Todhunter; working and conferring with him, and obeying him as utterly and silently as his own shadow. To the men it seemed natural that the two should be together. The circumstances made it natural that they scarcely spoke to each other. But without seeming to observe, the leader's eyes watched Luke more closely than they watched the rise of the water. They knew Luke worked beyond his strength, with a desperation and humility which were not good;

which they did not wish to see. The familiar handsome face was pale and averted, and without a shadow of that enthusiasm which was its wont. Todhunter, recalling some sayings of Jessie's that day, found time to wonder; and observed his friend the more closely and unobtrusively.

But at last Luke had melted from him like a shadow.

The fight was over. They had locked the ocean into the New Lode forever, and Great Trevanny had lost a valuable part of herself; but she was safe. So the men said; and crowding upon their chief who had taught them how to do it they would have swept him to the top with them in triumph. But he would not be taken. He had still a matter to attend to, he said; but he would be up to them presently.

They left him reluctantly. They thought he was alone, but he knew he was not.

In that place were many dark holes and corners where a man who was partly beside himself with humiliation and disgrace might go unperceived to die. Todhunter had seen the shadow of them in Luke's face; and, knowing his friend, had guessed

imperfectly at the reason; so searched quickly and patiently until he found him.

The cavalier stood all disheveled as he had worked at the barrier, coatless, his white face gleaming above his naked throat. It was the face of a man desperate and not wholly responsible. He had no light, but Todhunter's shone down full on him. Feigning to be merely weary, he said harshly, "You? What do you want, now?"

Todhunter said casually, "Wanted you. I thought we'd go up together. Anything wrong about that?" It seemed for an instant that the two measured each other, each half stripped, disheveled, soiled and muddy; each, for different reasons, only a wan, ominous shadow of his former self.

"I'll be up presently. I've got to stay here and rest a minute."

"I thought so. You've done the work of any two of us. I'll wait for you if you don't mind." Todhunter would have leaned negligently against the wall, but Luke flashed out, angrily.

"Can't you see when you're not wanted? Leave me! I told you I couldn't come on at present."

Swiftly and without ceremony Todhunter's arm

went round him. "Don't talk trash to me. If you can't go up yourself I'm here to help you. What's the use of that thing, lad?" he said compassionately, drawing forth from the cavalier's hip pocket the weapon he knew was there, and flinging it far behind them down the passage.

Such an oath rang out as no sane Luke Lyttle had uttered. There was an instant's sharp grappling; but twice his strength could have done nothing against such hands as those that held him. With such an issue as this at stake Todhunter had strength enough; and after a moment or two Luke's resistance sank to terrible, broken whispering. "Let me go, Tod. I can't go up. I've sunk so low, there's no other way but this. Leave me. You'd break my neck if you knew—what a friend I was to you this morning."

"I know! Do you think I care?" the gentle voice said; but the hands still grasped inexorably.

"I care, though. By ——! if you won't, I've got a knife yet—"

But Todhunter forced the pale, furious face backward. Looking down into the crazed eyes he saw the devils of wild remorse and despair there. There

was no use in arguing. "Leave you be d—. I'm sorry, but there seems no other way," he whispered softly; then he struck that friend's chin a blow—it seemed a gentle one—and gathering up Luke's senseless body carefully, strode heavily away with it.

With him went a thought that well nigh dissolved him in pity and tenderness toward it—and, because he had not his full strength, set stars dancing furiously on the tunnel walls. Did successful lovers go mad so easily? Were they ready to die of mere infidelity to a friend? Not usually. This poor, handsome, limp maniac! The gray eyes looked down with wonderful kindness. Jessie had colored distressfully and said: "Luke would not come, Tod!" Of course there was more than that. Luke's body fast became almost a featherweight.

Now for all their sakes, and the name of Lyttle, there must be no scandal! If he waited for help, Luke would recover, and rave again perhaps. The man engine swung up and down, waiting for the chief's ascent. It was a huge, senseless brute of a machine. But for all those great and dear interests involved he must manage the ascent somehow. And, being himself, he did.

He shifted Luke's head till it lay heavily on his shoulder, and slung the senseless arms about his neck so that the body hung straight up and down in line with himself. Stepping out on the tiny, treacherous platform on which only one man might stand, he began his perilous undertaking. There were no nerveless limbs or heads projecting into the path of the compunctionless beam. It was a double body bound together by his strong arms into one. Forty stops were made, and at each stop he made the necessary change swiftly and successfully. He learned what it was to tremble before he reached the top. But there a great crowd of all sorts of men, gentlemen and laborers, drew the two off, still bound together. Todhunter could not see very well, but knowing explanation of some sort was necessary he said to the world in general: "He worked down there, sir, like the dickens!—worked till he went crazy. He'll be a bit off his head when he comes round, I fancy. When I got him he was talking a lot of nonsense."

This last was an afterthought.

* * * * * * * *

The New Lode had involved in its tragic end,

however, two persons who had not anticipated any further connection with it. Corin, being lame from his injury, and at the same time laden with booty, was in need of a quiet place where he might rest and recover for a few days before he and Pike could leave for distant parts, as they intended. Since his enemy, the chief engineer, had so unexpectedly recovered his senses Corin had no longer any wish to meet him. Besides, it was best to be as private as possible at present. Home being closed to them, the pair decided to go to the old Puffing Hole, whose caves had harbored many a thief before their day.

They entered at low tide. Corin found the undertaking difficult, but with Pike's help it was safely accomplished, and then there remained only the question of food. They expected that a hue and cry would be raised; but if once they had food they could remain hidden for many days. They were not ignorant of the old Puffing Hole's resources for concealment.

Pike, being the able man, was to go forth immediately and forage therefore for Corin and himself.

He went with many misgivings. But the valley

was engrossed that day with the fate of its heroes who were fighting the disaster in the New Lode. Twenty such as he would not have equaled the sum of one of those. So Pike's doings escaped even comment because he was so worthless, but afterwards people vaguely remembered them.

Securing his supplies, he returned with speed to his crony, and succeeded in entering the place before the tide blocked the entrance.

But Corin, it appeared, had moved from the place where Pike had left him. This was not so strange, as the tide had risen considerably, and there were safer places if he could have reached them.

The spot was steep and slippery and wrapped in obscurity, and the water beneath had grown deep; Pike dared not attempt to follow until the tide should have reached the full and commenced to ebb once more. He fretted the more because Corin, the crafty, had insisted on keeping their gains on his own person for safe keeping. Wherever Corin had gone, therefore, thither had Pike's wealth gone also.

For several hours he remained solitary on his dark and slippery perch. At first for a while he

hallooed until he grew hoarse; but Corin did not reply, and Pike, remembering on a sudden that his noise might betray him to the searchers, ceased to shout. High tide, filling the cave's mouth, muffled the scream of the storm, the bellowing of ocean. The monotonous surging and washing of the water on the rocks under him made him drowsy, but the fear that he might fall kept him awake.

Presently he made out a long, dark object washing back and forth in the tide, fretting against a quiet corner near him. He discerned the outlines of a capsized boat, and remembered there had been a wreck outside that morning. He did not care particularly about that; but he was glad to have means of going to find Corin, who, he began now to suspect, had reasons of his own for this sudden, peculiar disappearance.

The boat was marvelously easy to reach. In fact, it came softly to him of itself, guided by some unseen and mysterious force; and Pike did not stay to reason that it might be a current that brought it.

So he went voyaging in search of his crony.

Corin was hiding in a little cove of rocks behind a point quite near. As the oarless boat came on,

skirting the jutting sides which offered a handhold to pull by, he came forth stealthily to meet his crony—white faced, his black hair hanging wet and lanky on his forehead, and his dead black eyes, wide open, staring up at Pike out of the water. He passed gravely by, slipping from the little cove, and Pike followed—greatly against his will; for in his horror he had let go his hold on the rocks, and the same current that had his friend's body had him also. So they embarked together on their last jaunt. Corin, who had always been the leader, went first, as though he knew where they were going. But Pike was ignorant; and long before he could discover, the narrowing rocks of the place past which they rushed had dashed his life out.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN LOVE IS KING.

It was two hours past midnight, and the preacher sat silent as a graven image in his son's room, beside the figure that, flung heavily on a couch, had slept without stirring for many hours.

Long before, Todhunter had come in from the mine, talking incoherently and feverishly of some urgent business at Mr. Lyttle's, about which he must instantly be gone. Even while he spoke the deep sleep of utter exhaustion had fallen upon him, and robbed him of all remembrance.

The surgeon had come in to see him twice during the evening, and had redressed his wound, but the sleeper had not moved or shown any sign of life except that he breathed; and the surgeon had said to let him be. Nature was so undertaking to repair her own damages, and when she was ready he would awaken of himself.

Long hours the preacher sat, while the wind

moaned solemnly up and down the valley, as though grieving now for irreparable wreck and mischief done. Since midnight the storm had been swiftly dying away; though ocean still roared with undiminished thunders. Glints of troubled moon looked forth an instant through flying cloud armies on the abyss of mad billows; on the old man's immobile face by the window, and across the sleeping figure of his son.

There was something death-like in the sleep, for the face was in absolute shadow. So great a form, so handsome and strong in every proportion—so loose and motionless! The knotted, undulating muscles rippled beneath the surface with every movement of respiration; but the dark skin covering them was as clear and smooth and perfect in texture as a maiden's. In the fleeting moonlight the great throat and chest still gleamed as bare as they had been when Todhunter rose out of the pit with Luke in his arms. The preacher, with sombre pride in his stern eyes, went and fetched a woolen cloth and laid it across lest the night air be too chilly for a sleeping man.

Once or twice as he sat there watching he had

smiled slightly, not with amusement, but with that same sombre pride. He was thinking of a moment, several hours earlier, but quite late in the night, when Jessie had come, alone, enveloped in a long dark cloak and hood, to inquire how Todhunter was. She had heard from the surgeon, she said, how such a sickness as his might have killed many men. The light from the door revealed, but the preacher with stately courtesy had feigned not to observe, how red her cheeks were and how blue and sweet and half ashamed her eyes for what he might think of her for coming there all alone at that hour. Even when she commanded half timidly that he should say nothing whatever to Todhunter of her coming, he seemed not to think that strange either; but desired only that she let him take her back through the storm to Mr. Lyttle's. But this she would not allow; and had vanished again, spirit like, into the night. The preacher had gone back and looked again at that large, sleeping, prostrate, ugly Todhunter, and had felt foolishly proud and old. He had seen beautiful women of many countries in his time, but none who was sweeter and fairer than this one.

Some time in the small hours the old man must have dropped asleep in his chair, for he roused suddenly to a strange yet familiar sensation.

It passed instantly, but in the flash between sleeping and waking he had fancied himself back in a remote Hindoo village he remembered, with an earthquake in progress. In this quiet Cornish moor he had felt again—or dreamed that he felt—that same fearful vibratory motion of the earth. He could not tell whether he had dreamed; but it seemed to his quickened sense, listening intently and waiting, that a great, low, indistinguishable, rushing sound, like the hollow roar of distant wind arising, mingled with and augmented the near, louder thunder of the ocean.

A voice startled him. His son, broad awake, gazing intently at him from the shadows, asked quietly: "What was that? Did you shake me, sir?" But before the preacher could answer a second distinct tremor passed through the room.

Todhunter reached the window with what seemed a single movement. To the old man it appeared to be but an unusually high tide on which the fitful

moon was shining, but his son knew that landscape better.

It seemed the sea that rose, but in reality it was the land that was sinking. The work of disintegration that had been going on for centuries all along the coast had been finished in the storm; and the sea had gained at length a final death grip on the land. A wide strip of country was now only a water-eaten, trembling shelf which the hoary waves of the Atlantic were taking back stealthily to themselves in the dead of night. And on the doomed strip were many humble little houses of Great Trevanny's workmen, with people in them asleep.

In supreme moments every soul acts after its nature. Todhunter acted after his. For a moment he paused, mounted on the black horse which some hand had found and returned since the morning. Large and silent, with the night wind blowing on him, and the faint moonlight only in part revealing him, he was looking anxiously at the Lyttle house, where Jessie lay asleep and endangered. But the danger to those others was more imminent. He acted according to his nature. To his father with

a swift word and a look he intrusted her safety and was gone.

The dying storm against which he raced sang in his ears, "Come back." This that he was going to meant death, probably. But to him courage was not a thing with a name, any more than height is height to the mountain.

As he reached and breasted the slope, there lay before him a gray emptiness where acres of moor land had been. He and those helpless ones stood on a trembling shelf which would go the next; which would have gone already had it not been for the dam down in Great Trevanny which held back the sea from those underground passages for a while. But the subsidence of the land would give the sea abundant other entrance. The final engulfment was a matter of a few moments only.

In the beginning the land rose out of the waters and now in the night and storm, while the faint moon looked down fitfully and clouds drove in tattered armies across her white face, the angry waters rose to take their own again. There was little a man could do in the presence of such a cataclysm as this; but all the little possible to him Todhunter did.

Lights gleamed in one or two of the houses as the inmates grew vaguely aware of their danger but did not know yet whence it came. They had an instant's vision of him riding down on them, shouting that the flood was coming, and driving them back to the higher ground inland. The able-bodied ran at his order, feeling the earth tremble under their feet; and seeing mad gray billows fighting over the spot where houses and workshops had stood last night. As they went great slices of land which they had trodden all their lives, and trees which had been landmarks to their grandfathers, disappeared about them like smoke. Only the figure of Todhunter, grim, fearless, gigantic—seen sometimes here, sometimes there, on his prancing, terrified black horse—still remained voluntarily because there were yet others to be warned.

There were so many who could not run—the old and the very young, and others—whom the strong neglected or forgot. It was for these he had come.

He held lost, screaming children before him on the saddle. His arms were filled with them. Once, having almost ridden down a sorry little figure, hud-

dling a brown puppy and too terror-stricken to run, he stooped and grasping it, swung it up strongly behind him. "Hold me fast, little Jan. We won't leave thee behind, whoever goes." There was a world of comfort in his voice if Jan could have heard. The panic-stricken deaf boy clung fast to him and was carried with many another that night to safety.

The black horse seemed to bear a charm against death. As often as he seemed gone the faintly illumined night revealed him elsewhere, driven by his relentless rider into the face of devastation. The flying fugitives, the frequent darknesses which obscured the frightened moon, and the swift dissolution of the dark changing landscape over which the wild gray waters were triumphing, seemed a dream scene recalled through the films of memory and daylight. He who was the spirit of it appeared to have been cast by nature in a moment of prevision into a special mold against this hour, and afterwards reared close to herself in preparation. No man less the master of his own instincts, less fearless and strong, less swift and quiet in emergency, could have grappled with her in her throes as he was doing.

The evil dream was quickly over.

The end was fast coming and he knew it. Yet he stayed. It was not that he did not think of death; but he thought more of these others to whom death was also coming.

He would have liked to know of his sweetheart's safety, but darkness shielded the upper valley from him and he could not tell. He heard a long, clear whistle he knew—and then the end he had foreseen came. The sea had burst into Great Trevanny; the ground under him was going, his horse was fighting for a foothold, sinking backwards—but that whistle was Luke Lyttle's, who was coming swiftly to him—and if Luke had left Jessie she must be safe. It was for her that his only fear had been.

After this there ensued a long period of darkness, wherein all memory was blotted out.

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Dawn was already in the east. The moon was dropping down in pallor overseas, and vanishing stars peeped through rents in the ragged cloud curtains at the scene on the earth. Off shore great fantastic rocks, crowned still with heath, gazed

island-like toward that continent from which they had parted. Regretful Earth clung raggedly to their sides, which a few more storms would wash clean, and make wet and glistening, so that creatures of the sea might creep and swim and make their homes there. And then the rocks, which had risen out of the sea, would once more and forever belong to it.

Slowly and wearily, leading his horse, which had gone lame, Todhunter had returned to the solid ground where were the refugees. Close beside him walked Luke, as in the old days. In that last moment, when darkness had come down and blotted out all memory, Todhunter had fallen forward on his horse's neck, and the animal had extricated itself from the rush and run wild, bearing him with it. Luke had secured it, and led them both from that dangerous place.

The engineer's friends and those humbler people who owed him life would have made a hero of him; but this he did not allow. His dizzy thoughts were running with such strength as was still left them upon a different matter.

When his eyes swiftly but vainly searched the

throng for something that should be there, it was Luke who divined and drew him away on some other pretext to a point whence that something was discernible which the lover's eyes missed.

In the dim, quickly growing dawn Jessie stood with his horse Pawnee beside a great uplifted, lonely tooth of rock, gazing seaward across the waste and ruin of the country they all loved. Lightly clad, she had partly enveloped herself in the long dark cloak; and the wind's rough touch betrayed every slender, dejected and lovely outline of her, and flung the bright golden purity of her hair about her person in drifts. Luke stood with his back toward her distant figure, his hand on his friend's shoulder in the old attitude.

"Tod, I've had my dream lately and wakened; and as you assisted at the awakening I'll make no apologies. You won't waken from yours, I reckon, because you haven't the same good reason that I had. I wish you a long life, dear old chap. I'll keep the crowd in check down here. You belong over there." As Luke spoke he swept his hand toward the girl's figure in the distance. And so, having made such honorable amends as he could,

that good comrade passes from the present story.

Todhunter went wearily but swiftly in the direction indicated.

He was close to Jessie before she discovered him. He leaned his arm across Pawnee's back and stood looking down upon her, but did not speak. Because he had set her aside yesterday when he went down the mine, and last night had not come to her, she had taken it as a ruthless token from him that he no longer loved her; and had gone away wretchedly by herself. But love was plain now in his gray eyes looking down on her; and as her timid ones were raised and held by his in that first glance of meeting, she read something of the truth, yet scarcely dared to believe.

In that long glance the veil of misunderstanding which had been raised between them grew very thin, and seemed to melt away as the night was fading beyond the hilltops. The past hour, which had seen the man in the face of supreme peril braving death for the sheer sake of his duty and of those whom others had forsaken and forgotten, had been to the girl like the very hour of bereavement. Now as he stood silent before her, with his chivalrous

deeds, his true love of her, the honor that men held him in, and all his ugliness too—full upon him, all the sweet womanhood in his sweetheart bowed before him with a sense of unworthiness. In that moment he held her love at its purest and highest and best.

His head was bent as he waited for her to speak. This was the tender right his love and passion would exact of her for her sin against him. But, coloring tremulously, she only drew nearer to him; and at once he relieved her of the burden—his own deep and gentle voice pulsating like the blood in her cheeks.

"Luke told me where you were, Jessie. I understood, dear, that I might come to you?" It was a question.

"You *might?* How dare any man—any man—tell you, Todhunter, that you might come to me?" she whispered hotly.

Her face, with the warm lovely dawn on it, was uplifted; but the eyes he worshiped were denied him. That was only because of strange, new, undreamed of possibilities in herself which his pres-

ence stirred; but he did not know that. He still restrained himself, dreading.

"Jessie," he whispered, bringing his tall head still lower, "this is no sense of duty, is it? Look at me, dear—in my face. Are you quite sure that you can tolerate—?"

"Oh, your face," she cried with a deep, bitter sob; "your dear face, I'd rather have it than anything else on earth. Tod, don't punish me any more—don't."

Then as swiftly, silently and overpoweringly as the dawn wrapped the hills his arms enfolded her. As the wind drove her hair in a great golden cloud upon him her lips lay under his; and the earth and the waters above and beneath were once more without form and void.

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Later, wrapped in her cloak and with her hair tucked properly within it, she sat with him in the shelter of the rock, and explained to him all those things she had wished to explain yesterday, and which, he whispered smiling, scarcely mattered now; though he would listen if she wished. He in his turn had many things to tell her. Long they

talked with silver-sweet lovers' tongues of their plans for their life together; but this was the eve of their marriage, and what they said was not for us.

Great Trevanny was wholly submerged; and all the lower valley and its restraining slopes were sunk beneath the sea. The upper part, with some of its houses, was still left; and as it was a rich country and its mineral wealth great, already hope sprang up that another Staley Crags would soon rise in the wake of the older one.

All our friends saw that come to pass a few years later. There the Lyttles and the old preacher, Todhunter's father, continued to live. Jan learned to communicate with the world of his fellow men in the years while Todhunter and Jessie lived across the seas; and Ruth Hardy came again to visit in Staley Crags. Not at the Lyttle house this time, but—

But all that would require another long story to itself.

THE END.